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ESSAYS AND STUDIES

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW
LEIPZIG NEW YORK TORONTO
MELBOURNE CAPETOWN BOMBAY
CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE
UNIVERSITY

ESSAYS AND STUDIES

BY MEMBERS OF

THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

VOL. XV

COLLECTED BY SIR HERBERT WARREN

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1929

804
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THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

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Printed in Great Britain

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BERNARD GROOM.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD

'MATT.'—One always knew him; and one never saw him. There was the Matthew Arnold, the Poet who wrote *The Forsaken Merman*. The music of the verse—my father almost chanting it—the pictures of the under-sea world, 'where great whales come sailing by'! It at once recalled and intensified the joy of looking down into some clear rock-pool, where the delicate fronds of rosy or green seaweeds hang suspended, and red sea-anemones wave their feathery tresses, while beneath them tiny fish and crabs go about their little businesses; or of trailing a hand over the side of a boat and looking down into the clear green depths below. Then the village, 'the little grey church', were quite concrete, quite distinct, although not any village or church I had actually seen. It was enchanting; and the enchantment began so early that I cannot date it. The Merman must have come into our family circle as soon as he appeared anywhere. So early that he got mixed up with the world of the *Water Babies*, which gave one so much interesting if sometimes erroneous information about salmon and dragonflies and sea-urchins and other monsters of the deep.

So was Matthew Arnold the Poet always known to me. But there was, or had been, another Matthew Arnold—'Matt', who was also known to us. A tricksy sprite this Matt, at once the joy and terror of his friends. My father would often smile to himself when he spoke the name; laugh indeed, recalling some saying or performance of his. One story my father loved to tell—telling it, I think, rather to himself than to the children, and always with a spasm of laughter. I will call it 'Mr. Winkle at Breakfast'. But the additional point, the sting, if sting there had been, of Matt's joke, I did not know until long afterwards. My father, as a young master at Rugby, was accused by severe censors of certain offences; to wit, of wearing garments not always

subfusc in colour, and further of riding to Meets in Term time. As to the first accusation, the existence of a blue velvet waistcoat among the theatrical properties of our childhood lends colour to it. As to the second, schoolmasters hearing of it in more strenuous days, have merely groaned and wished such a thing were still possible. Nevertheless my father was made a house-master at the age of twenty-seven. It may be supposed with what trepidation he faced his first entertainment to parents, a breakfast. Imagine the young house-master, his well-cut lips set in firm lines, his thick black hair brushed from his pale brow, his tail-coat, his high collar and satin stock, black and seemly, receiving with dignified courtesy a staid couple who had committed their son to his charge. It was doubtless something of a relief to him when Matt unexpectedly appeared. The parents were, of course, delighted to meet in this tall young man with the striking face and black whiskers a son of the late Dr. Arnold. Disillusionment was too soon to follow. Matt had on his most languid manner. He had seated himself at the board, doubtless groaning with all the horrible plenty of the period, and my father offered him a choice of dishes. He waved them all fastidiously aside.

'No thank you, my darling'—it was thus he used to address his friends—'I've just bitten off the tails of those three bull-pups of yours, and that does take the edge off one's appetite.' Consternation—bewilderment on my father's part; frowning repudiation of the ownership of the bull-pups. One imagines the male parent commenting to himself—'Young hypocrite! Queer thing, though, a schoolmaster breeding bulldogs'; and the lady to herself—'Bitten off! Disgusting! Poor doggies! Oh, the horrid young man!'

But Matt had not finished. Still languid, he turned again to my father. 'By the way, I had a look at that mare of yours when I was in the stable. I'd advise you to have her vetted before you ride her to hounds again.'

Now my father could not deny that he had a mare in his stables, nor, trivial as her offences had been in that direction, could he swear that she had never so much as smelt a hound.

In this vein did Matt continue the conversation with his unfortunate friend; and I am not sure which was the Mr. Winkle at that breakfast; whether it was Matt or my father, unwillingly thrust into the part. Perhaps there were two Mr. Winkles.

As to the parents, one could imagine what they said when the front door had closed behind them. Among other things, certainly—'That young man the great Dr. Arnold's son? What a grief he must have been to his father!'

No, Matt had not been a grief to his father: only a puzzle. It cannot be denied that Dr. Arnold thought his eldest son flippant. So did some other earnest people. It must be remembered that to be earnest was the fashion among the Intelligentsia of the day, just as to be immoral is the fashion among our modern Intelligentsia. It is objected that some of these Victorians were not really earnest, only pretending to be. It needs strength of mind not to follow the fashion, and perhaps some of our modern Intelligentsia are not so immoral as they pretend.

My old friend George Russell used to tell a story about Dr. Arnold and his son: how Matt, then in the sixth form, having been guilty of some offence or mistake, was made by Dr. Arnold to stand up behind his chair for the rest of the lesson. From this point of vantage, said the story, Matt amused the whole form by making faces derisive of his father. George Russell must have known that this story could not be true, so it would have been useless to tell him so. He must have known, as an old public-school boy, that such tricks cannot be played on a good schoolmaster. He must have known, as editor of Matthew Arnold's *Letters*, of the son's love and reverence for his father. But he was born and bred in a *milieu* naturally antagonistic to Arnoldism, and enjoyed telling the story. Nevertheless he would have been amazed at the grotesque pictures of Dr. Arnold drawn by modern hands, wherein he appears as a Fee-fo-fum ogre, catching and sucking the moral blood of trembling boys.

The brilliancy and charm of Matthew Arnold were recognized by his Rugby contemporaries; but the youth in whose

future they enthusiastically believed was another—Arthur Hugh Clough. In him they thought they saw the coming great man and great poet. When my father came to Rugby, school-fellows said to him: 'You ought to have come a Term earlier, then you could have said you had been at school with Clough.' Matt, they said, could roll out any amount of beautiful nonsense-verse, but there was thought in Clough's. In short, though they failed to perceive it, it was Matthew Arnold and not Clough who was the born artist. But he was not a Keats or a Tennyson, to whom the practice and perfecting of their art was the sole purpose and occupation of their lives. There are artists in this wise, and there are artists of a vitality not more intense but more extensive; of a larger humanity and perhaps stronger intellectual powers, who are irresistibly drawn towards Life. Dante threw himself into the political struggles of his day. The *Divine Comedy* could not have been written without some such large experience of men and Fate. Yet had not the Poet been compelled to eat the bitter bread of the exile, it might never have been written at all. John Milton abandoned poetry to be Latin Secretary to the grim Protector. It was not a yearning for his legitimate bride the Muse, but the failure of his eyesight and the death of Cromwell which sent him back to her. Goethe, the spoilt child of Fortune, was able, thanks to a magnificent physique and a cold heart, to live the life of a Society man and great conversationalist, to discover a hitherto unsuspected bone in the human body, and to write *Faust*.

This type of genius is more interesting than that of the pure artist, but it enormously risks failure. And it was to this type that Matthew Arnold belonged. His besetting interests, however, were not political; it was to Education that he sacrificed the Muse. He had an hereditary talent for the reform of education, was at once an enthusiast for his task and rebelled against it. I remember how old friends of his and my father's would come to the house and my father would ask for news of Matt. And they would reply, with a laugh, 'Bemoaning his lot as Inspector of Schools, as usual'—or words to that effect. And I, who loved some

of his poems so much, would be silently very sorry for poor Matthew Arnold.

The hard fact was that he had to earn his living. By singular good fortune the great poets of the Romantic Period were saved from this necessity. They had enough to live upon; even Keats had enough to die upon. Matthew Arnold tried his hand at schoolmastering. He then became Secretary to Lord Lansdowne; an appointment not too exacting to be combined with poetry, but one which probably developed in him the Society man. Mrs. Humphry Ward tells us that much as he was sought after, his sense of humour and his warm family affections prevented him from being spoilt. No doubt. But he had introduced another distracting element into his life. Reading his letters one asks with wonder how between dinner-parties, visits, inspecting schools, and writing reports which are in their way classics, he found time to write anything else. The answer lay in the strength of the Arnold physique and the immense Arnold capacity for work. Nevertheless he was only in his fortieth year—an age at which Tennyson had still to write *Maud*—when he wrote the last poem of any value which he was to produce, the very beautiful *Thyrsis*.

Perhaps looking back upon his career, he would have said that it was better so; that he preferred 'to feel his life in every limb' rather than to develop one fully and atrophy the rest. He had already written enough fine poetry to secure him fame; if in fame there is any security. But in Poets' Corner at Westminster may be heard much crackling of withered laurels.

His first years as a school inspector must have been infinitely laborious. An inspector had then no special district and we find him constantly travelling from one end of England to another. His letters sometimes betray irritation, yet we have the testimony of a schoolmaster that 'he was always gentle and patient with the children'. His work became of great interest when he was appointed to visit schools on the Continent with a view to the improvement of English education. It may be that he took too rosy a view

of French and more especially German schools, but there could be no question that popular education was more advanced in those countries than in England. Matthew Arnold's Report and advice were subsequently of the greatest value in the formation of our state Secondary Schools.

Thus the Arnold desire to reform education, to do good to others, fulfilled itself at the expense perhaps of Poetry; or perhaps only at the expense of Prose. But, unfortunately, he also felt the Arnold desire to reform or re-constitute Religion. The contemporaries of Tennyson were assailed by something he called Honest Doubt. Every one who desired to be numbered among the Intelligentsia had to encounter this dragon; especially such as we ill-naturedly dubbed Earnest Stupids. (Let it not be supposed that the Earnest Stupid was a Victorian product. I think he may be found in Molière, and he is certainly with us to-day however strangely transmogrified.) Honest Doubt was something of a clock-work dragon. It ran about the Stage of the mind snapping its jaws in a most alarming manner, but it nearly always stopped when a St. George or a St. Michael appeared on the scene and tapped its head with his spear. The publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* brought about a revolution in the world of thought. The Scientific Materialism to which it gave rise was a far more formidable foe to Religion than eighteenth-century Atheism or Tennysonian Doubt. Seeing this 'grim wolf, with privy paw' daily devouring the souls of the younger generation, Matthew Arnold rode out to their rescue, mounted on what can only be called, in the words of the classic Scotch Sergeant, a Fancy Religion. *Literature and Dogma,* though much discussed, made no converts. The greater part of his prose writings, even those which deal with pure Literature, is dead stuff. Yet picking one's way, as it were, over fossils, one lights upon opinions, sayings so living, so prescient, that it is difficult to believe they were not written to-day rather than half a century ago. The hatred of John Bright which obsessed him in his writings was just, but becomes wearisome. It was not based on political differences but on the natural distaste of a Matthew Arnold for a John

Bright; a distaste with which I entirely sympathize. I once had a curious conversation with that narrow-minded, arrogant, and ignorant Pontiff of the Liberal Party. His oratory must have been fine indeed in order to render such a man acceptable as a leader to educated men; or their party prejudices uncommonly strong. Matthew Arnold estimated at their true worth the petty measures which called forth so much of this tremendous eloquence and moral enthusiasm. One measure, at any rate, of far-reaching national importance was passed in the sixties of the last century: the Education Act of Matthew Arnold's brother-in-law, William Forster. The Poet foresaw, as practical politicians did not, that the rising power of the Trade Unions would not be put at the service of the Liberal Party; but his perpetual vilification of what he calls the Middle Class becomes tedious, like his abuse of John Bright. It is also really dead stuff because it attacks social characteristics, such as Puritanism, which have faded into the background. It only appears to live because it happens to chime with a Socialist chorus of the present day, though its real meaning is quite different. To the Socialist, with whom Matthew Arnold would have had no sympathy, the Middle Class means every capitalist, however large or small. What is it really? A wit has said it is always the class immediately below our own. One cannot help being reminded of this when one reads Matthew Arnold, since to him it appears to be the business class immediately below the professional. Pitt said that the Middle Class was the connecting-rod running all through English society. It is in fact the kaleidoscope of all classes, from a peer's grandson who is earning his living to the small tradesman whose grandson may become a peer. And this shifting up and down of families is nothing new in England; it was going on in the Middle Ages.

Matthew Arnold noticed this peculiarity of English society, though he looked at it, so to speak, from the other end. He says: 'What is really the strength of England is the immense extent of the upper class—the class with much the same education and notions as the Aristocracy; this, though it has its dangers, is a great thing.' The Middle Class then whom

Matthew Arnold vituperates, would appear to be the commercial class. I leave their defence to some more competent pen. Enough to say that from Birmingham, which appeared to him a mere Temple of the great John Bright and a breeding-place of little John Brights, there was even then arising a leader of an ideal school of Painting, English by its very idealism and delicacy—Burne-Jones. Also a leader of men so far from parochial that he might be said to take the whole Empire for his constituency—Joseph Chamberlain.

In *Culture and Anarchy* there is much of permanent interest, such as the chapter on the Greek and the Hebrew attitudes of mind; but the British individualism which he condemns as Anarchy he would surely not condemn to-day. It is rather the democratic urge to act and think in herds which we have to fear. Blessed be that British individualism, that personal independence which even in the Middle Ages was remarked by the monkish chronicler as an English characteristic, if it can survive the pressure of Democracy, the steam-roller of Socialism, and keep us free. But there are passages in this book, as in his other writings, of an almost uncanny prescience, so that it is difficult to believe that they were written sixty years ago. He says:

> In our modern world . . . the whole civilization is to a much greater degree than in Greece and Rome mechanical and external and tends constantly to become more so.

If he could speak thus of our European civilization, drawn down from sources so ancient and full of their savour as old wine is full of the savour of past summers, what would he have said of the new American civilization—if such it can be called? Again his uncanny prescience! 'We are in danger', he says, 'of being overwhelmed by a wave of more than American vulgarity.' Where was the danger at the time he wrote? 'More than American' because the Eastern States, inoculated with European civilization, were then all of America that came in contact with the Old World. The Middle West, the host of the 'Hicks', has now arisen in its horrible strength, and all European Culture is in danger of being overwhelmed by a wave of more than vulgarity.

This word Culture has been rendered almost unusable by 'ignoble use'. It should be rehabilitated, because there is no other word to replace it. It is not the whole but it is the soul of civilization. Matthew Arnold thus defines it:

> Culture . . . places human perfection in an internal condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. . . . It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature.

His American Addresses also contain wise sayings and prophecies, as do his essays on abstract literary subjects, as Poetry and the function of criticism. Of Poetry he says:

> The benefit of being able clearly to feel and deeply to enjoy the best, the truly classic, in poetry,—is an end . . . of supreme importance. We are often told that an era is opening in which we are to see multitudes of a common sort of readers, and masses of a common sort of literature; that such readers do not want and could not relish anything better than such literature, and that to provide it is becoming a vast and profitable industry. Even if good literature entirely lost currency with the world, it would still be abundantly worth while to continue to enjoy it by oneself. But it never will lose currency with the world, in spite of momentary appearances, it never will lose supremacy.

When he passes from the General to the Particular in Literature the vision fails him; he is a blind guide. Tennyson was a much better critic. He recognized the supreme genius of Keats, as Matthew Arnold, although fairly appreciative, did not. The two worst of the *Essays in Criticism* are the one on Shelley, which sins by lack of appreciation, and that on Byron, for whom he retained the absurd enthusiasm of his boyhood. Tennyson had also in his youth romantically adored that marvellous *poseur*—hardly excelled as such by Oscar Wilde—but made no mistake about him in later years. In Wordsworth Matthew Arnold found a topic at once dearer to him and more akin to his genius; yet he praises the poet wrongly as 'knowing Life', which assuredly Wordsworth did not. Once in his youth he had taken a look at it—and run away.

The wit of *Friendship's Garland* has, alas! largely evaporated. The once brilliant picture of Russell, the famous *Times* War Correspondent, mounting his charger has lost its colour. Even Adolescens Leo, with his pensive 'Delicacy!—I think I once knew that word', is incomprehensible to a generation whose Young Lions of the Daily Press could never possibly have known it. Mrs. Humphry Ward has left a vivid picture of her uncle as he appeared in middle life:

> The face strong and rugged, the large mouth, the broad lined brow and vigorous coal-black hair. . . . Nothing at first sight could have been less romantic than his outer aspect. . . . He stood foursquare—a courteous competent man of affairs, an admirable Inspector of Schools, a delightful companion, a guest whom everybody wanted and nobody could bind for long; one of the sanest, most independent, most cheerful and lovable of mortals. Yet his poems show what was the real inner life and genius of the man; how rich in that very 'emotion' 'love of beauty and charm', 'rebellion against fact', 'spirituality', 'melancholy', which he himself catalogued as the cradle gifts of the Celt crossed indeed always with the Rugby 'earnestness', with that in him which came to him from his father.

Now all this about the Celt seems to me very unnecessary. The poetic temperament is essentially full of 'emotion', 'love of beauty and charm', and the rest. In almost every one of highly strung temperament, if notably in the artist, a vein of melancholy is present, however deeply hidden. It is frequent in men and women conspicuous for their wit and gaiety. Why call it Celtic? In the poems of Shelley, a Sussex man, considerably more of the special qualities styled Celtic could be found than in those of Matthew Arnold. I must confess that I have never read his *Studies in Celtic Literature,* and circumstances prevent me from doing so now. But I have a suspicion that they unlocked the sluices from which so much nonsense on the subject has since poured; largely produced by people who, as I believe was the case with Matthew Arnold, do not know any Celtic language. I protest that we do not require the 'Celtic fringe' to furnish us with imagination. We English are a mixed race—the

Anglo-Saxon legend is long dead—but whatever we are, it is England, this little England of the English, which has produced the greatest poetic literature since that of ancient Greece.

By the time Mrs. Humphry Ward knew her uncle he had almost ceased to write poetry. She speaks of his 'irrepressible humour', but the frisky Matt of earlier years had disappeared; quite rightly, for frisky gentlemen of forty are apt to be more tiresome than amusing. He had worked hard at work often uncongenial; and he had married. As poetry *Calais Sands* is not an adequate pendant to *Dover Beach*—one of his best and best-known poems—but it has an autobiographical interest. It tells us something of his love-story. The young Secretary to Lord Lansdowne had fallen in love with Lucy Wightman. He had not at the time an income on which marriage was possible and therefore felt that he had no right to press his suit. But he allowed himself, unknown to her, to precede her across the Channel to watch her land in France, himself unseen, and equally unconfessed, to spend the night in the same hotel as his Beloved. This is Poet-love. Thus did Dante follow and watch Beatrice Portinari; though it is true that Dante had not so far to go. Matthew Arnold married his Beatrice, and the marriage was happy. As a father he suffered heavy sorrow in the loss of two sons, one of whom, a boy of sixteen, was especially dear to him. His poems and his letters, from the earliest to the latest, bear witness to the unusual fervour and faithfulness of his family affections. His poem *Rugby Chapel* disposes of the suggestion that he was antagonistic to his father. As a poem it appears to me to be overrated. It has fine passages but suffers from a didactic tendency only too present elsewhere in Matthew Arnold's poems. His special metre, the half-length blank verse, effective enough in *The Strayed Reveller*, is a dangerous form when reflection begins to dominate imagination. It requires the poetic afflatus to be 'going strong' to prevent it from falling into a jerky clock-work kind of motion.

His tendency to become over-reflective much seldomer masters him in the true lyric. The short lyric might be

called a cry of emotion, but for the lyrics which are not so. Shelley's are mostly cries, but not always. Matthew Arnold's are almost always reflective, even in those addressed to the fictitious Marguerite. To say this is not to disparage these beautiful poems; only to indicate their special quality. The reflective, the meditative is seldom long absent from his poetry. When not definitely expressed it is felt behind the colour of his pictures, like the light shining through the painted glass of the church-windows in the *Tomb among the Mountains*. His *Empedocles on Etna* is no play. It is, like the Marguerite poems, a series of beautiful lyrics. 'The Play' is certainly not 'The thing' with Matthew Arnold. *Tristram and Iseult* remains delightful reading to those whose artistic palate has not been ruined by cocktail literature. It is full of human feeling and of those landscape pictures in which the Victorian poets excelled, painting them with the loving minuteness of the P. R. B. But the tragic crisis, the actual dialogue between the dying Tristram and Iseult is totally wanting in dramatic sense. Matthew Arnold has, however, left us two other story-poems differing greatly from each other in style and in subject, but both admirable. Of *The Forsaken Merman* I will not trust myself to speak, having loved it too long. But of *Sohrab and Rustum* I can judge more coldly. It is surely a story of deep human interest and a poem of great beauty, both in form and imagery. Who can forget the closing picture of the mighty Oxus flowing majestically on to his 'luminous home of waters'?

The Scholar Gipsy and *Thyrsis* have, beside their intrinsic beauty, a special charm for Oxford men and women. One wonders across how many strange landscapes, alien skies, those pictures of the gliding Thames, the wide flowery meadows, the grey villages and gentle hills, all those lovely English scenes, have floated on the wings of their melodious verse; in how many English hearts they have revived memories of happy careless youth. Alas that those pictures should represent a countryside little of which now remains! When I first knew Ferry Hinksey it was as in Matthew Arnold's time, a little grey village, full of quietness and

charm. Above it sloped a steep field where big elms had planted themselves happily, giving it a park-like air. This old Oxford men called Arnold's Field, because it had been a favourite haunt of Dr. Arnold's. It is now, I believe, covered with villas. The ridge of Boar's Hill—the ridge of *Thyrsis*—is completely transformed by building; but before that happened the view of it from Oxford had been gradually altered by the growth of trees. About the centre of this view fifty years ago a single tree stood up against the sky, prominent only because it stood alone. Many a time I have looked up from Oxford and seen it black against the sunset and my father has told me that this was the Tree of *Thyrsis*. It stood beside what was then a sandy track and is now a road. At a distance it resembled an elm, but in fact it was an oak. This was a detail which, my father said, would easily have escaped Matt. The topographical objection that from this particular point you cannot see the 'three lone weirs' mentioned in the poem—I myself have never been able to determine which they are—he dismissed for similar reasons.

I happened to be with him when in April, 1888, he received with great sorrow the news of his old friend's death. Matthew Arnold was staying with a sister in the North awaiting the arrival of his eldest daughter, with her husband and child, from America. He was in high spirits, and in spite of his sixty-six years, had jumped lightly over a railing. A little afterwards, while out walking, he died suddenly, like his father, of *angina pectoris*.

MARGARET WOODS.

THE ITALIAN ELEMENT IN ENGLISH

A FEW disturbing factors make it difficult to evaluate the extent of direct Italian influence on the English vocabulary. Many Italian words have been adopted in English with a spelling suggestive of a French intermediary. Again, the indiscriminate application of Romance endings, such as *-o, -ado, -etto, -ina*, is apt to confuse issues.

The French-looking spelling of a word is not necessarily indicative of a French source. Owing to the steady formative action exerted by the French on the English language in the Middle Ages, the process of naturalization of foreign words could take in England a course similar to, though independent of, the one taken in France. In other cases the early adoption of a foreign word in a form strongly reminiscent of its source was apt to be discarded for the form that the same foreign word had taken in French, since this latter form was more congenial to the English language. Thus *banquet* occurs in the earliest instances[1] as *bankettis* (plural) (1483, Caxton, 1502, Arnold), *bankettes* (1509, Fisher) (It. *banchetto, -i*), but it was not long before such directly borrowed forms were discarded in favour of the Frenchified ones *bancquettes, bankets, banquets*. So there is an early hesitation in the spelling of *bagatelle*, which is found sometimes spelt *bagatello* (It. *bagattella*, mod. It. *bagatella*, refashioned on the French spelling). We come across the early forms *intrigo*, *intrico* (both in the Italian connotation of 'Intrigo's of State', and in the quasi-Italian of 'plot of a play', where the proper Italian word is really *intreccio*) side by side with *intrigue*, which, of course, prevails in the end. In such cases, though the source of the prevailing English spelling is French, Italian either actually gave rise, or contributed, to the spreading of the word.

[1] Whenever I am speaking of instances it is understood that I refer to the *O.E.D.*, from which I have derived invaluable help.

Then there is the promiscuous use of Romance endings. *Strappado* may strike as Spanish any one who has vague notions about Romance languages. But no such word occurs in Spanish. The source is It. *strappata* (whence also the double *p* which is not found in Fr. *strapade, estrapade*), altered according to a popular sonorous suffix : the word did not remain Italian, nor did it become like the French one ; it hovered in a neutral Romance zone. *Ambuscado, bravado, barricado, scalado, stoccado*, &c., are other instances of the same phenomenon. *Noctambulo* (17th cent.) may be either a Latin word fitted with the suffix *-o*, or It. *nottambulo*, with the first part refashioned on the Latin. On the other hand, a word like *palmetto* has a quasi-Italian sound. The source is, however, Spanish *palmito*, refashioned after the Italian diminutives in *-etto*. *Prunella-prunello, morella* (cf. moreen), *marcella-marsella* (a kind of cotton or linen cloth, from Marseilles), *morello-morella* (a kind of cherry), owe their endings to the same English tendency to sham derivation. *Concertina, semolina*, witness to an English partiality for the ending *-ina* : the Italian word which is reminded by the former, *concertino*, has a different meaning (a little concert), while the latter reproduces with an alteration It. *semolino*. *Compradore*, the name of a class of native employees in European establishments in China, has a misleading Italian appearance, while its source is the Portuguese *comprador*. *Olio*, also, has an Italian appearance, though it is meant for Spanish *olla*, which remains *olla* also in Italian. The English spelling is possibly due to a false analogy to It. *olio* (oil), as one may infer from the following passage of Davenant (1668):

> A sea of olio, and in it hams of Baijon lying at Hull with sails furl'd up in cabbage-leaves.

The word *olla*, pronounced *olya*, may have recalled to Davenant the common Italian expression *un mare d'olio*, a calm sea.

Mustachio was adopted in the sixteenth century partly from Sp. *mostacho*, partly from its source, It. *mostaccio, mustacchio*. During the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries

the word appears in a multitude of corrupt forms, some of which, like *mowchatowe*, seem to point to a confusion with Sp. *muchacho* (boy). It was finally superseded by Fr. *moustache*, though the plural *mustachios* is still in use. *Linguo*, *lingo*, are English-sprung forms for *lingua* (*franca*). *Grotto* does not derive from It. *grotto*, which occurs in Dante with the meaning of 'a steep slope', but from *grotta*, which has been altered early (in the first part of the 17th cent.) according to the more common and sonorous ending in *-o* (the forms *grotta*, *grotha*, also occur). *Salvo* (corresponding to It. *salva*) represents a similar case.

The vitality of the *-o*, *-ino*, suffixes in English can be illustrated with contemporary instances. The ending in *-o* seems to be considered as capable of appealing to the imagination of the public: compare the huge family of Glaxo, Rinso, Bisto, Pudlo, Glitto, Brasso, Zebo, &c. As for *-ino*, in D. H. Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* (1923) we read that the author and his wife used to call a little bag containing cookery implements 'the *kitchenino*' (p. 17) (*kitchenette* seems in current use; see the title of a volume published by Cape, *Kitchenette Cookery*). Both these cases, the one of family slang and the other of commercial slang, afford evidence of the same tendency to *lingua franca* formations.

A case of misleading Italian appearance of a word seems to be instanced in an early use of *tramontane*. There can be little doubt that the later (16th cent.) word was borrowed from Italian.[1] But the occurrence of the word *tramountayne*

[1] The word seems to have become familiar to English people through the terminology in use at papal elections, where one heard of *tramontanes* (in this sense properly It. *oltremontano*: cf. *ultramontane*) in connexion with non-Italian candidates for the papal chair (instances of this use in 1642, 1662). This can account for the present English sense of *tramontane* as 'an outsider, one who is outside the pale', better than the primary Italian meaning, 'one who dwells beyond the mountains', applied to foreigners across the Alps. In the case of the papal election (which was apt to stir a universal interest) the word had got more detached from the original geographical association which, so long as it was kept in mind, found no counterpart in England (*transmarine* would have been more appropriate).

(the north pole-star) in the West Midland alliterative poem *Purity* (*c.* 1370) is surely to be explained through old French *tresmontaine, tramontane.* Italian influence becomes general only with the Renaissance. In the Middle Ages we come across isolated cases like that of Chaucer.

Chaucer was deeply affected by the vocabulary and the rhymes of his French sources; the same happened, naturally in minor proportions, because of the greater difference between the English and Italian languages, with the Italian sources. The most remarkable among the many borrowings of rhymes in *Troilus* is the rhyme *Monesteo-Rupheo* (Bk. IV, st. 8, cf. *Filostrato*, C. IV, st. 3) on account of the Italian form preserved in the endings of those proper names. Sometimes Chaucer's candour goes so far as to borrow the foreign word, and then to add a paraphrase, in the way of a gloss, as when, after copying from Boccaccio the learned word *ambage* (*Filostrato*, C. VI, st. 17), he proceeds to illustrate it (*Troilus*, Bk. V, st. 129). This word *ambages* is used by Chaucer only once: it does not occur again, independent of its source. Other instances of Chaucerian words failing to establish themselves are: *peoplish* (*appetit*) for 'popular', used in *Troilus*, Bk. IV, l. 1677, to translate Boccaccio's (*appetito*) *popolesco* (*Filostrato*, C. IV, st. 165); *palestral* (*pleyes*), in *Troilus*, Bk. V, l. 304, rendering Boccaccio's (*Teseide*, C. VII, st. 27) *palestral* (*gioco*); *erratik* (*sterres*), in *Troilus*, Bk. V, l. 1812, corresponding to (*stelle*) *erratiche* in the *Teseide*, C. XI, st. 1; *affect*, a characteristically Dantesque word (*affetto*), used only in *Troilus*, Bk. III, l. 1393, in a passage inspired by Dante; and *revoken*, used in the sense of 'to recall' only in *Troilus*, Bk. III, l. 1118, as *rivocare* in the corresponding passage of Boccaccio (*Filostrato*, C. IV, st. 19). In the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (A, ll. 188 ff.; B, ll. 1285 ff.) the *tras* (*of women*) appears to be a reminiscence of the *tratta* (*di gente*) in Dante's *Inferno*, C. III, ll. 55–6.

Nonce-words like these used by Chaucer under the immediate influence of the source from which he was deriving represent the embryo stage of the process of verbal assimilation. This stage, interesting as its study may be as regards

a single author, is of little or no significance for the national vocabulary. Similarly, the rare use of the Italianate word *sollevation* (for which the *O.E.D.* gives two instances, both of the 17th cent.) or the use of *sovran* (It. *sovrano*) for 'sovereign' in Milton and a few writers following his example, mean little more than personal idiosyncrasies.

A next stage towards naturalization is represented by words which designate things peculiarly Italian. These words come into general use, because they cannot be aptly translated; but if they do not extend their field of application, causing the original meaning to be lost sight of, their relation to the English vocabulary can be compared to that of the conquered Jebusites to Israel.

A word of this class is *Signor* (and *Signora*, *Signorina*), always employed to describe Italians.[1] *Cicisbeo*, the name given during the eighteenth century to the recognized *cavalier servente* of a married woman, *ruffiano*, the Italian correspondent of *ruffian* in the sense of 'a go-between', *bagnio* for 'a brothel'[2] (both these last words being introduced in the first quarter of the 17th cent.); *podestà*, *sbirro* (an Italian police officer), *contadino*, *vetturino*,[3] and the recent *bersaglieri*, *Alpini*, *arditi*, are all definitely associated with Italy. *Lazzarone* and *camorra* are not known to have ever lost their Neapolitan, nor *mafia* its Sicilian, local colour; notwithstanding an attempt in 1792, by Mrs. Charlotte Smith, to speak of 'the lazzaroni of England'. Lazzaroni are associated with the popular Italian game of the *mora* or *morra*, but more often still with the *dolce far niente* (an expression which has become proverbial everywhere). *Doge* and *gondola* remain

[1] The English use of *Signor* before a name has been influenced by the corresponding use of Fr. *Monsieur*. For instance, nobody in Italy is likely to say: Signor Mussolini. The frequent occurrence of the form with elision of the final *e* (before a family name) has caused the word to be used in that form abroad also when Italians would say *signore*.

[2] The senses of 'oriental prison' and of 'convict prison' seem to enjoy a wider application.

[3] The expressions *vetturino travelling*, *to travel vetturino-fashion* (19th cent.) are noteworthy. Cf. Fr. *course en voiturin* (e.g. the title of Paul de Musset's book, *Voyage en Italie et en Sicile: courses en voiturin*).

Venetian institutions, though the former word has been occasionally applied to any chief magistrate or leader, the latter sometimes used for a ship's long-boat (anglicized as *gundel*), and is naturalized in the United States ('a large flat-bottomed river boat'), and as the name for a car suspended from an airship. Thoroughly Venetian is also the *Bucentaur*. *Corsair* (with the Italian forms *corsale*, *corsaro*, in early use) keeps within the boundaries of the Mediterranean; *casal* or *casale* is the name of a hamlet only for Italy and Malta, *faldetta*, a combined hood and cape, is typical of Maltese women. *Padrone*, as an employer of street-musicians, beggars, &c., or as the master of a trading-vessel in the Mediterranean, refers only to Italians. *Guelph* and *Ghibelline*, and *Carbonari* are spoken of only in connexion with Italian history, and such is also the case of *signoria* (which, however, influenced the spelling of *signory*, of French origin), *gonfalonier*, and *condottiere*. Since about the mid-nineteenth century, art critics and literary people use currently *trecento* (*trecentista*, *-ist*), *quattrocento*, *cinquecento*, always with reference to Italian art. *Seicento* appears early in the present century. *Nuncio*, *monsignore*, *capuchin*, *biretta*, *zucchetta* (or *zuchetto*), are limited to the persons and things they designated from the outset, and so are *Madonna*, *bambino*, and *pietà*. *Madonna*, however, was used also to describe a mode of dressing the hair, and appears in such combinations as *Madonna braid*,' *face*, &c. The Church term *quarant'ore* for the forty hours' exposition of the Holy Sacrament is now used also in Roman Catholic churches in England. *Catacomb*, though it pleased some authors to use the word in a looser sense (even in that of 'a cellar with recesses for storing wine', W. Scott), is still firmly linked to Rome. The fireworks of St. Peter's Eve are at once recalled by those who are acquainted with the word *girandola*. This latter word, however, is naturalized in the Frenchified form *girandole*, which designates, beside a rotating firework [1] and a revolving jet of

[1] The current English word is *Catherine-wheel*. There is, however, a current English name for a kind of firework, *rocket*, which apparently derives from Italian *rocchetta* (17th cent.).

water in an ornamental fountain (two Italian senses: *girandola* used in both, in England, already during the 17th cent.), also, in more recent times, a branched support for candles and an ear-ring or pendant (senses of French origin).

Sirocco (and *scirocco*), *tramontana* (occasionally *tramontane*), *libeccio* (and *libecchio*) suggest Italian winds only, in spite of isolated cases of extended or figurative use of the first one. Milton's (*Paradise Lost*, x. 704–6)

> Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds . . .
> Sirocco, and Libecchio,

only witnesses to the familiarity of that poet with Italian. *Borasco* and *burrasca*, the former nearer to the Spanish, the latter reproducing the Italian, word, are only found in descriptions of the storms of the Mediterranean: *bora*, the name of a severe north-east wind, refers to the Upper Adriatic.

Brocatello, *cipollino* (and *cipolin*), *giallo antico* (and *giall(o) antique*), *peperino*, *travertine*, do not designate other than Italian qualities of marble and stone.

Stiletto remains a specifically Italian weapon, likely to conjure up a picture of *banditti*, while its doublet *stylet*, come by way of France, has more civilized connotations (of 'slender probe, graving tool', &c.).

All the preceding words, then, preserve to a considerable degree their local colour; some of them, with many others of rarer occurrence, were used by Elizabethan dramatists to give a touch of exoticism to their plays. So when we hear the heroine of Webster's *Devil's Law Case* exclaim (III. ii. 94 ff.):

> Come forth then
> My desperate Steeletto, that may be worne
> In a womans haire, and nere discover'd,
> And either would be taken for a Bodkin,
> Or a curling yron at most; why 'tis an engine,
> That 's onely fit to put in execution
> Barmotho pigs—

we feel at once that it is the author who speaks to explain to an English audience the use of the thrilling exotic weapon,

which is found spelt here, as every now and then during the seventeenth century, in a way perhaps intended to reproduce the Italian pronunciation, if not to suggest a popular etymology (from *steel*).

Elizabethan plays are full of Italian words which are nothing more than picturesque patches. Italian phrases, proverbs, interjections, occur in the plays of Kyd, Marlowe, Shakespeare (who derived from Florio), Webster, Marston, Ben Jonson. This latter dramatist, as he was the most learned amongst his colleagues, made the most deft use of Italian words and phrases. A word which was sometimes employed by Elizabethan and later authors was *bona-roba* for a wanton. The obscene oath *cazzo!* was spelt also *Gadso* and *Godso*, in consequence of a false analogy to oaths containing the name of God.[1]

By imperceptible shades some of the words designating Italian characteristics are transferred to similar features elsewhere. Any writer endowed with an enterprising sense of analogy and allusion can enlarge the sphere of application of a word; but still, as long as the use remains confined to one or a few writers, we can hardly feel justified in speaking of a word as having definitely acquired a transferred sense. You may hear historians speak of a *Risorgimento* of the Irish nation, but the word does not yet seem to have lost its original connexion with a specific period of Italian history. *Irredentism*, which appeared in the eighties, has been extended to describe similar agitations in the Slav countries, and its use may be said to be general by now. *Fascism*, as bearing on a system of policy that can be set to work everywhere, has already become naturalized: there is still some hesitation in the use of the adjective, which is found both in the original form *Fascista* and, more frequently, in the anglicized form *Fascist*.

Persons acquainted with the Elizabethan dramatists may incline to approve the use Wyndham Lewis makes of the word *magnifico* (originally 'a Venetian lord') in the following instances:

[1] See *The Works of John Webster*, ed. Lucas, vol. iii, p. 306.

The contemporary magnifico or multimillionaire. (*The Lion and the Fox*, 1927, p. 88.)

Thus when some magnate in mufti (he is possibly a labour-member in 'real' life, or he may be an armament magnifico) is observed with a brilliant party issuing from a Rolls-Royce. (*The Enemy*, no. 1, 1927, p. 190.)[1]

Cavalier affords the instance of a word completely naturalized, and enriched in the new soil with meanings it never came to possess in its native one. From the designation of an Italian military man or squire, it soon acquired that of a courtly gentleman, a gallant at large, and a swashbuckler, as it became associated with the Italianate affectations of the courtiers: so it was identified with 'Royalist' during the Civil War. From the meaning of 'gallant' the transition was easy, by way of irony, to the opposite connotation; this connotation of 'careless in manner, off-hand' is the only one alive nowadays. *Courtesan* (the younger English brother of the Italian *cortigiano*, 'a courtier') became obsolete, but *courtesan* (It. *cortigiana*) for a 'harlot' has established itself in the vocabulary. Also *cicerone* and *charlatan* (this latter appearing in Ben Jonson's *Volpone* in the quasi-Italian form *ciarlitani*) have since long left, the one the Roman forums, the other the Italian squares, either to instruct or to bore with their yarns the citizens of the United Kingdom.[2] Their nimbler brother, the *saltimbanco* (plural *saltimbancoes*; the later spelling *saltimbanque* from the French) has proved much less obtrusive. *Cantabank* is very rare. The *brigands*[3] and

[1] Writers of polemics and pamphlets, in a word (*absit iniuria verbo!*) journalists, seem to be particularly inclined to extend the sense of the words, and to employ impressive foreign words: they aim at giving to their style a glitter which, short-lived as it is, nevertheless succeeds in keeping the reader's attention alive. To quote only one instance of capricious use, Wyndham Lewis, in *The Lion and the Fox* (pp. 201, 236, 248, 254, 256, 262) affects the word *altofronto*, used adjectivally: a fanciful formation, possibly after English *highbrow* (e.g. *altofronto* gibing; *altofronto* banter and bitterness).

[2] *Cicerone*, in the sense now common to all European languages, appears for the first time outside Italy in England (1726 Addison). See B. Migliorini, *Dal Nome Proprio al Nome Comune*, Genève, 1927, p. 141.

[3] The early use of *brigand* (*Morte d'Arthur*; Capgrave) conforms to

bandits have left the Italian mountains for the English thoroughfares,[1] while the elder brothers of the latter, the *banditti* (spelt with a double *t* not by form-association with *ditto*, as the *O.E.D.* suggests, but to keep short the quantity of the *i* in the penultimate syllable) are still connected with their native country. *Banditti*, however, went half-way through the process of naturalization, since we find it used as a collective singular by De Foe and Scott. 'Deer-stealers . . . are ever a desperate banditti' runs the quotation from Scott (1826). *Bravo*, also, in the meaning of 'hired soldier or assassin, reckless desperado' has become naturalized. The form *brave* in this sense is very rare. Whenever the plural is formed in the English way (*bravoes*), it can be said that there is a good presumption for considering the word as naturalized. In point of fact, however, very frequently both plurals, the Italian in *-i* and the English in *-os*, *-oes*, are found side by side (so *bandeti*, *-ditie*, *-ditty*, &c., coexist with *bandettos*, *-ditos*, *-ditoes*, *-detties*, *-dities*, &c.). *Vendetta* is now of universal application (the first instance of transferred meaning in 1861), and has given rise to the substantive *vendettist* (1904, in *The Times*).

Carnival, *regatta*, *ballot*, contrary to *doge* and *gondola*, have forsaken their Venetian home a long time ago. The first English regatta was held on the Thames in June 1775. *Gala* was naturalized in the seventeenth century, perhaps after the example of France. So was *catafalque*, which occurs also in the Italian spelling *catafalco*. *Gonfalon*, originally the banner of the Italian republics and of the Roman Church, has been applied extensively to any banner used in Church processions, and also figuratively (e.g. 1887, McCarthy: 'Home Rule was the gonfalon of a small, compact party of Irish members in the House of Commons'). *Casino*, in the senses of 'club-house, dancing saloon, gambling house', was known

the primary connotation of 'irregular soldier', and was borrowed in this sense either from French or actually from medieval Latin *brigancii*, *brigantii*, *brigantes* (cf. Capgrave, *Chronicle*, 1460, *brigauntis*).

[1] e.g. Sinclair Lewis, *Dodsworth* (1929), p. 169: 'He had been insisting that all French taxi-drivers were bandits.'

on the Continent before it became established in England: the instances of English use from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century refer to France and Germany. In mod. Italian, *casino* is pronounced as in French owing to its being reimported from France in this sense. The original Italian word has nowadays the connotation of 'brothel'. This is one of the many cases in which a word, once naturalized in a foreign country, develops along independent lines. A typical instance is afforded by *villa*, which still means in Italy a rather large country-house, whereas in England the name *villas* is frequently bestowed on such jerry-buildings as Italians would call *villini* (cottages) at the best. An instance from Surteès (1853) brings out the difference very well:

> The farm houses are dotted about as thickly . . . as to look like inferior 'villas' falling out of rank.

Belvedere (spelt also *belvidere*), *ghetto*, *grotto* (with the doublet *grot*), have a universal application. A few physiographical terms were first used in connexion with Italy: *volcano*, *lava* (this latter word became familiar after the famous 1760 eruption of Vesuvius), *solfatara* (spelt even *solfa terra*), *mofette* (through French), *lagoon* (and *laguna*),[1] *cascada* (with the original form *cascata* in early use). Lassels in his *Voyage in Italy* (1670) has for instance:

> The fountains, the Cascatas, the Grottas, the Girandolas [in the sense of 'revolving jets of water': see above], and the other rare water-works.

The mirage called *Fata Morgana*, originally associated with the Strait of Messina, was from the very beginning (first record in 1818) used in a transferred sense. *Saint Elmo's fire* may be either from Italian or from Spanish.

Italy contributed to the list of mammals the *pipistrel*, to that of birds the *avocet* or *avoset* (also the Italian forms *avo-*

[1] The first two records (1612, 1673) refer to Venice; the instance from Dampier's *Voyages*, referring to the Mexican coast, quoted by Skeat (*Principles of English Etymology*, 1891) in support of a Spanish origin, is later (1697).

setta, *avocetta*, in early use), the *beccafico* and the *francolin*; to that of insects the *tarantula*, the *aurelia* (now scarcely in use, *chrysalis* being the ordinary term) and the *cicala*, or *cigala* (when occurring in passages not referring to Italy, these two forms may be traced also to Provençal); to that of plants the *belladonna* (writers still seem to be aware of the Venetian origin of the name down to the middle of the 18th cent.), the *maroon* (come to England by way of France, also in the senses of 'a colour' and of 'a kind of firework', for which latter the Italian has a correspondent in *castagnola*), the *scorzonera*, the *soldanella* (bindweed); to the list of grapes and wines the *muscatel* or *muscadel* (found also in the Italianate forms *muscadella*, *muscatello*, *moscadelli*, *muscitella* (see also below, p. 63); to the list of minerals the *pozzolana* (occurring in a variety of spellings, some affected by Fr. *pouzzolane*), originally applied to the volcanic ash found near Pozzuoli, later, at the beginning of last century, to the name of similar artificial preparations, e.g. 'puzzuolana of Iceland'; the *tufa*, found also spelt *tufo*, which is the common Italian form, and *tuff*, which may be due to a French influence, the *granite*; to the list of metals the *bronze*.

Apropos of *bronze* it is noticeable how the Italian idiom *faccia di bronzo* for 'a shameless person' finds a counterpart in such English expressions as:

1728, Pope: Imbrown'd with native bronze, lo! Henley stands.
1726, D'Anvers: His face was bronzed over with a glare of confidence.
1742, Young: Art, cursed art wipes off th' indebted blush
From nature's cheek, and bronzes ev'ry shame.

A variety of opal is called *girasole* after its Italian name. *Madrepore* is adapted from It. *madrepora*, used by Italian naturalists in the late 16th century. *Terramare* (also in It. form *terramara*, pl. *-are*) is used by modern anthropologists.

Ferret is apparently to be traced back to It. *fioretti*, floss-silk (Florio, 1598). Another word for floss-silk, also derived from the It., is *filoselle* (Florio: *filisello*). *Umbrella* was perhaps first recorded in literature by that searcher after rare and exotic allusions, John Donne, who wrote in 1609

> We have an earthly cave, our bodies, to go into by consideration, and cool our selves; and . . . we have within us a torch, a soul, lighter and warmer then any without; we are therefore our own umbrella's and our own suns.

From the day of Donne, in which the umbrella afforded a choice simile for a sermon-like passage, to our present time, when the object tends to become a very cheap *brolly*, what a decay in dignity has accompanied the process of naturalization! A different kind of debasement is observed in the word *confetti*, which in Italian meant, and means still, a kind of hard sugar toffee formerly thrown, now usually distributed in boxes among friends, on the occasion of weddings (corresponding to the wish-me-joys of East Anglia). In England the word, which is fairly recent,[1] has accompanied the evolution of the missiles from sweetmeats to gesso pellets and then to disks of coloured paper. These latter meanings belong in Italian to *coriandoli*, which were originally a kind of *confetti* having a fruit or seed of coriander inside.

Among the names of diseases, *malaria* and *influenza* began to be heard of in England about the middle of the eighteenth century. *Malaria* is the typical fever of the *maremma*, the Italian marsh-land by the sea. *Influenza*, i.e. 'the epidemic', made its first alarming appearance in Italy in 1743, and spread all over Europe; in process of time the name was loosely applied to any severe catarrh of the respiratory mucous membrane, until its rebirth as *Spanish flu* in 1918. *Pellagra*, *scarlatina*, are also recorded. A health-certificate used to be called in seventeenth-century Italy *bullettino*, and in this sense the word is first found in Evelyn's *Memoirs*, 1645: 'We went now towards Ferrara, carrying with us a Bulletino or bill of health.' The sense of 'short official statement, especially of progress in campaign' came to Eng. *bulletin* by way of France, and was scattered broadcast during the Napoleonic wars. *Manifesto* became naturalized by the middle of the seventeenth century.

[1] And, therefore, probably come by way of France. Cf. D. Garnett, *No Love* (1929), p. 4: 'Confetti was not used in England in the eighties' (notice the use of the word as a collective singular).

Certain words seem to reveal a more intimate acquaintance with the psychology of the nation from which they are borrowed. They stand for customs, attitudes, points of view, which receive a particular emphasis in one place more than in another, and are called accordingly after the names given to them by the people of which they are typical.

Furore was coined by the same nation which first used the word *voga* (i.e. *vogue*) for 'a fashion': *to make a furore* translates the Italian *far furore*. The present use of the word in England seems to have slightly altered from its source. For instance in Aloysius Horn (*The Ivory Coast in the Early Nineties*, 1927, p. 38: 'Writing's always been a bit of a *furore* with me'). *Capriccio* and *caprich*, both previous to the Frenchified form *caprice*, describe a mood which seems to have struck foreigners as characteristic of Italian people (the first instance of *capriccio* as a musical term is much later than its appearance in the sense of 'a sudden change or turn of the mind without apparent or adequate motive'). *Gusto*, side by side with senses close to those possessed by the Italian word, has been largely used in English since the beginning of the nineteenth century in the sense of 'zest', in contexts where Italians would rather use *foga, fervore, zelo*, and such-like. For instance:

> This magnificent gusto is one of Dickens' greatest qualities. (O. Williams, *Some Great English Novels*, 1926, p. 28.)
>
> One would sacrifice a good deal of accuracy for an ounce of Dickens' gusto. (Ibid., p. 73.)
>
> That was our strength and our hope—the hardihood of the common man's unfastidious gusto. (C. E. Montague, *Rough Justice*, 1926, p. 53.)
>
> Well-known shady characters have been resuming their activities with unnatural gusto. (*Manchester Guardian*, Nov. 14, 1926.)

The introduction of such words as *imbroglio, fracas*, seems to be due to the astonishment of northerners before certain exceedingly lively aspects of southern life. *Altruism*, after the French word coined by Auguste Comte from It. *altrui* (others'), was introduced into English by the translators and

expounders of Comte, in the fifties of last century. But this is a case of very indirect borrowing. *Simpatico*, which occurs in colloquial English since a few years, may be either the Spanish or the Italian word.[1]

Con amore, a phrase judged coxcombical by Lamb (1826), is often used with peculiarly English shades. For instance:

1828, *The Harrovian*: He has frequently spoken of his poetical labours in no very *con-amore* terms.

1859, M. Napier, *Life of Victor Dundee*: The murderous work, which he performed *con amore*.

In petto is an idiom apparently derived from papal elections. It is often taken erroneously for 'in little' (cf. *petit !*). *Ben trovato* represents in a shortened form an Italian saying (already existing in the 16th cent.) which became extremely popular abroad: *se non è vero è ben trovato*. *Fiasco* for 'failure' is possibly derived from the jargon of the theatre, though its origin seems to be found in the slang of Venetian glass-workers. The expression *a fig for* is said to be imitated from the similar use of It. *fico*, the word being used in its secondary (and obscene) sense. (Cf. Shakespeare, *Merry Wives*, I. iii: 'A fico for the phrase'.)

Incognito, said of the manner 'which the Grandees of Italie do often make use of, whenas they travell' (*O.E.D.*, instance of 1652) was early acquired to the English vocabulary.

Al fresco is pleasantly descriptive of Italian summer meals taken in the open air, possibly under a *pergola*.[2] A typically Italian social entertainment often described by eighteenth-century English travellers was the *conversazione*, a name which was subsequently given in England to assemblies of an intellectual character, and is still used for a *soirée* given by a learned body or society of arts. Italy gave to

[1] The connexion established by Weekley (*Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*) between *dudgeon* and *aduggiare* seems to me groundless. It is, however, just possible that *dudgeon* in the old phrase *to take in dudgeon* may be a disguise of It. *in uggia*, which is found very early in several locutions: e.g. *avere in uggia*, to dislike intensely.

[2] A curious, but fortunately unique, use of the expression is found, of course, in a journalist, Leigh Hunt: '... of putting on his shirt as he returns, or even of alfrescoing it without one.'

England the literary *conversazione*, and received in exchange the political *meeting*. The Italian habit of spending part of the year in the country, the *villeggiatura*, is often mentioned (in the incorrect form *villegiatura*, possibly influenced by French) by eighteenth-century authors. The word is applied to the same custom outside Italy (cf. Fr. *villégiature*).

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The largest Italian contributions to the English vocabulary come naturally from those fields where the Italians were pioneers. A short survey of words of this class will give us an epitome of the part played by Italy in the history of Western civilization.

Banking, as is well known, was first introduced into England by Italians; first by Sienese, then, after the middle of the thirteenth century, by Florentine merchants; Venice appeared on the scene at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Italian merchants were protected by Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell; they began to lose ground only during the age of Elizabeth. I need hardly remind the reader that the name of Lombard Street bears witness to the past blossoming of Italian trade in this country. The term *Lombard* was generally used to describe the Italians who first came to England as *campsores papae*, or trading agents of the Pope: it became very early a synonym of 'banker, pawnbroker' in old French. By the time of Langland the name had lost its geographical association, so that he could speak of 'Lumbardes of Lukes', i.e. of Lucca (*Piers Plowman*, C. Passus, v, 194; cf. also vii, 241, and especially 246: 'with Lumbardes letters . . . ich lenede gold at Rome.').[1] The abbreviation *Comp:*[a] on the Bank of England notes is nothing else but a faint echo of the vanished glory of many an Italian *Compagnia* or *firm.*[2]

[1] Cf. M. Zweifel, *Untersuchungen über Bedeutungsentwicklung von Langobardus—Lombardus*, Halle, 1921.

[2] *Firm* in the sense of 'style, or name under which the business of a commercial house is transacted' is probably taken from Italian *firma*: the first instance given by the *O.E.D.* belongs to the eighteenth century. By the end of the same century we find in use the term *del credere* (agent, account, commission, terms). *Rialto* as a common name for any exchange or mart is recorded for the end of the nineteenth century. For instance,

The very terms *bank* and *bankrupt*, though adapted with the French forms in mind, are ultimately to be traced to *banca*, or *banco*, and *bancarotta*. When in the eighteenth century the rules of Venetian gambling spread over Europe, Eng. *bank* was made to represent also It. *banco* in the sense of 'the amount of money which the keeper of the gaming table has before him'. *Cash* reproduces It. *cassa* possibly through the medium of Fr. *caisse*. *Ditto* (a variant of *detto*), *agio*, *risk* (which appears in early quotations as *risgo* and *risco*; it still occurs in the forms *risico* in Dutch, *Risiko* in German) are relics of a time when Italian trade dominated Europe. *Carat* reminds us of the passage (VII. 241) in *Piers Plowman*:

> Ich lerned among Lumbardes a lesson and of Iewes,
> To weie pans with a peis,

i. e. to weigh pence with a weight.

By means of their powerful mercantile marines (*mercantile*, another word of Italian origin) the flourishing Italian republics of the sea, Venice and Genoa, established the *traffic* between the East and the West. *Traffic*, too, is an Italian word, and in some of the early forms in which it appears in England, *traffigo*, *traffygo*, betrays its derivation from the Venetians, whose 'galeys of Traffygo', as an English text of 1506 has it, brought to the European *magazines* (*magazzini*, the Italian word for 'storehouses') the merchandises of the East.[1] No wonder, then, if some of these latter are called

Daily Chronicle, 23 Sept. 1901: 'It was this . . . that made it some forty or fifty years ago the rialto of the West Indian islands.' Perhaps through the *Merchant of Venice*, where Rialto is treated as a synonym to the Exchange.

[1] Some of these words have extended their sphere of application in English. *Ditto* was used as a substantive, meaning 'a duplicate'; in the plural, *a suit of dittos* came to signify 'a suit of clothes of the same material and colour throughout'. *Magazine* was transferred to titles of books (a magazine, i. e. a storehouse of information on a specific subject, &c.), hence the name of a periodical publication, *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1731) being the first of the series. By the beginning of last century, in East Anglia, *traffic* had acquired the meaning of 'passing to and fro of persons, &c. along road, &c.': this sense passed into French *traffique*, and from French into modern Italian.

in English after their Italian names: *benzoin*, *bergamot* (It. *bergamotta*, apparently a popular perversion of Turkish *beg-armūdi*, 'prince's pear'), *botargo*, *caviare*, perhaps *tamarind*. The spices imported from the Levant used to be *garbled*, i.e. cleansed (It. *garbellare*), and their weight was given in *rotoli* (*rotolo*, the It. word for *rotl*, an eastern weight, is frequently mentioned in various forms—even *rotello*, and plur. *rottolies*—in the 17th cent. and after). The Italians imported from Damasco the *damask* and other *damaskin* or *damascene* products (*damaskeens*, i.e. Damask blades—It. *damaschino*, through French; 'Damascene viscum' which 'cometh from Damasco', says a text of 1543); from Mussolo (the Italian name of Mosul) the *mussolina* (whence the English forms *muslina*, *mussolin*, 'muslin'), from Baldacco (Bagdad) they introduced the fashion of *baldachins* (occasionally spelt in English *baldacchino*, as in Italian). The Italian galleys crossed the *Archipelago* (It. *arcipelago*), i.e. the Aegean sea, which gave its name to any other sea studded with islands, and went to the towns governed by the *bassas*[1] of the *Grand Signior*, i.e. the Sultan of Turkey, who had a body-guard of *janizary* (some English spellings very close to the Italian form of the word, like *giannizary*, *giannizzer*), and kept a *seraglio* of concubines. Also the *turban* (spelt in a variety of forms, among which *turbant*, *turbanto*, *turbante*) and its vegetable brother, the *tulip*, probably became known to the West by their Italian names. The persisting Italian influence in the Levant is also witnessed in the English use of the word *fustanella*, pidgin Italian for 'the short white petticoat worn by men in modern Greece', and of the name *Zingari* for the gipsies of the East.

The Venetians, again, introduced into the Levant the Spanish dollar under the name of *piastra* (whence Eng. *piastre*, *piaster*); they had issued in 1284 the first gold *ducat* ('As fyne as ducat in Venyse': Chaucer, *Hous of Fame*, III. 258), which was called also *zecchino d'oro*, though mention of the *zecchin* or *sequin* (this latter form adapted from the

[1] *Bassa* (from Venetian *bassà*, corresponding to It. *bascià*), one of the early forms of *bashaw*, *pasha*.

French) is not found in English texts until the end of the sixteenth century. Another Venetian coin, the *gazzetta*, possibly gave the name to the first *gazette* (early English spellings *gazetta, gasette*, plur. *gazetti, gazettaes*) which was published in Venice about the middle of the sixteenth century. Other Italian coins known in England were the Florentine *florin* (in the French form), the *scudo*, and the *lira* (to-day usually unchanged in the plural, e. g.: 'Prices are in Italian lira'). The word *zero* dates also from the hey-day of Italian trade. *Galley-halfpenny* was the name given in the fifteenth century to a silver coin from Genoa, and the earthenware brought from Italy in galleys was called *gallipot*. Genoa gave its name to various goods (see p. 64). As the Italians held the supremacy of the seas, many of their sea-terms came to be adopted by the other European nations. Some of those words were borrowed by the English directly, others by way of France: it is not always easy to draw a line between the two classes. *Arsenal* appears in early forms as *archynale, arzenale*, from the Italian, whereas the existing one is that which is common to French, Spanish, and Portuguese. *Felucca, settee* (It. *saettia*), are clearly Italian, *caravel, galliass, frigate*, are through French, as well as *trinket, mizzen, Lateen* (*sail*), and possibly *pilot*. The English form *brigantine* for *brigantino* may be traced either to French or to medieval Latin *brigantinus*, which is found about 1400: it returned to Italy as an English vessel in its shortened form *brig*. *Argosy*, earlier *ragusye* (16th cent.) from It. (*nave*) *ragusea*, a ship of Ragusa in Dalmatia, owes to Shakespeare its use in the poetical vocabulary (*Taming of the Shrew*, II. i. 368, *Merchant of Venice*, I. i. 9, &c.). *Skiff* may be derived from *schifo* either directly or through French *esquif*; the pedigree of *bark* (It. *barca*) presents similar uncertainties. *Cape* may ultimately reproduce It. *capo*; *mole* in the sense of 'pier, breakwater' corresponds to It. *molo*. *Portolano*, or, in the French form, *portulan*, a book of sailing directions, &c., used by ancient navigators, is a term in current use among antiquarians since the latter half of last century. *Quarantine*, the period of isolation to which ships were compelled to pre-

vent infection, renders It. *quarantena*. For the performance of quarantine a *lazaretto* was provided in Venice and other sea-ports. *Lazareto* or *lazareta* was also the name adopted in some English merchantmen for the place where provisions and stores were stowed.

Among the consequences of the wealth accumulated in the Italian republics through trade, shipping, and banking, during the Middle Ages, there was that unprecedented development of social and artistic life in Italy which goes under the name of Renaissance. What the Italian merchant Romelio is caused to say by Webster in the *Devil's Law Case* (I. i. 8 ff.) is no mere piece of bragging:

> my scriveners
> Meerely through my imployment, grow so rich,
> They build their Palaces and Belvidears
> With musical Water-workes.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century Italian customs, fashion, tastes, styles, were imitated abroad. Also in the military profession the Italians became very skilled, though, unfortunately, only to the advantage of the foreign potentates who fought for supremacy in the Peninsula.

In Castiglione's *Cortegiano* one finds first laid down the rules of that court-life which had become diffused throughout Italy with the foundation of the principalities. There the ideal of a complete gentleman, excelling in both arms and letters, was proposed to Europe for the first time.

Italian fashions, such as Milanese bonnets, Venetian breeches, prevailed at the court of Henry VIII. At the Field of the Cloth of Gold the Mantuan Ambassador noticed how King Henry and his courtiers were 'dressed in long gowns in the Milanese fashion'. The *milliners*, i. e. the Milanese (early spellings *myllaner*, *-oner*, *millainer*), supplied England with 'Milan bonnets', ribbons, gloves, in short, 'fancy' wares and articles of apparel. In the *Privy Purse Expenses* of Henry VIII for the year 1530 we read for instance: 'Paied to the Mylloner for certeyne cappes, trimmed . . . with botons of golde', &c. The *capuccio* we find mentioned in the *Faerie Queene* (III. xii. 10) came from Milan.

Among the accomplishments of a courtier fencing and horsemanship had a primary importance. There was the Italian method of fence, and there was the Spanish one; the two strove for supremacy in England, and finally the Italian method won the day. But owing to the double, Italian and Spanish, influence, many words of the art bore signs of a mixed origin. In a well-known passage of *Romeo and Juliet* (II. iv. 25 ff.) Shakespeare holds up to derision the affected use of foreign fencing terms:

> The very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist . . . Ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the hay!

The same does George Silver in his *Paradoxes in Defence* (1599), a protest against the lessons of the Italian teachers:

> O you Italian teachers of defence, where are your *stoccatas, imbroccatas, mandritas, puntas,* and *punta reversas, stramisons, passatas, carricadas, amazzas,* and *incartatas* . . . apish devices with all the rest of your squint-eyed trickes.

The *punto dritto, riverso* (spelt *reverso, r'enverso*), really It. *punta dritta* and *riversa*, the *imbroccata*, the *incartata*, the *mandritta*, the *stoccata*, the *stramazon* (various spellings), were Italian; but the *passado*, the *imbrocado* (or *embrocado*), the *caricado*, the *stoccado*, wore a Spanish appearance. *Hay*, i. e. It. *hai!* 'thou hast (it)!' and *amazza!* were Italian shouts used in Elizabethan duelling.

Duello occurs side by side with the French-looking *duel* during the seventeenth century; the name of the written challenge, the *cartel*, was adapted in the French form from *cartello*. Most of those terms are recorded in Vincenzo Saviolo's *Practise*, 1595. *Risposte, riposte*, was introduced later, through French.

As for horsemanship, *cavalry* and *cavalcade* were Italian words introduced in the sixteenth century under a French disguise; the latter is found spelt also *cavalcado, cavalcata*. *Cavallerice, cavallerize*, soon became obsolete like many other terms of horsemanship, for instance *groupade* (an early variant of Fr. *croupade* under the influence of It. *groppata*), *pomada* or *pomado*. *Capriole* (substantive and verb) may

have been directly adapted from the Italian; an abbreviated form of *capriole* was *caper*. Many terms occur in both Italian- and French-like forms. *Gambol* is also found as *gambad*, *-baude*, *-bauld*, &c., or as *gambatis*, *gambettis*, *chambetta* (this latter in G. Markham), from It. *gambata*, to be distinguished from *gambado* (or *gambada*) (It. *gamba* + *-ado*, the It. word being *gambale*), a kind of large boot or garter attached to a saddle. *Curvet*, stressed on the final before the beginning of last century (It. *corvetta*), occurs as *curvetto*, *corvetto*, *curvetty*, &c.; *caracol* as *caracole*, *caragolo* (It. *caracollo*). *Terra a terra*, a kind of low curvet which was then taught to horses, was influenced by the corresponding French form *terre à terre*, which later superseded it. *Cavesson*, or *cavetzan*, *cavezan* (the former from a dialectal form or through the French, the latter directly from It. *cavezzana*) was a kind of nose-band of iron, *scatch* (It. *scaccia*, in Florio), an oval bridle-bit. Among the 'aids' or 'helps' which became known to the English through Frederico Grisone's *Ordini di cavalcare* (Englished by Thomas Blundeville in 1565–6), and similar treatises by others, there was the Italian exclamation *via!* This was used also by commanders, and in a general sense by Shakespeare (spelt *fia*, in the *Merchant of Venice*, II. ii. 11).

The Italian word of horsemanship which was most fertile in the English vocabulary is *manage*, substantive from *maneggio* (the training of a horse in its paces) and verb from *maneggiare* (to handle, especially to manage or train horses). Both substantive and verb got confused with Fr. *ménage*, 'household', *ménager*, 'to husband, to spare', and the French verb influenced the sense-development of the English word. In the writings of Dryden and his contemporaries there are frequent instances of *manage* (as well as of *menage*) which can only be regarded as deliberate gallicisms. *Cozen* has been tentatively traced to It. *cozzonare*, 'to play the horse-breaker or courser . . . also to play the craftie knave', from *cozzone*, 'a horse-breaker . . . also a craftie knave' (Florio). The word appears in the sixteenth century, and was often punningly connected with *cousin*.

The taste for jousts and tournaments was revived under the influence of the magnificent pageants and tourneys of the Italian courts. *Impresas* (spelt in the singular also *impressa*, *imprese*, *imprizza*) and *mottoes* were part of the spectacular shows; a good idea of a Renaissance tournament in the Italian taste can be gathered from the description in Sidney's *Arcadia* and in Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*. By the middle of the seventeenth century a new word for tournament was introduced from France, *carousel*: needless to say the source of the word is It. *carosello*.

Dancing was another essential accomplishment of the courtier. Dances of Italian origin popular in English Renaissance were the *passa-measure* or *passy measure* or *passameze* (*-mesa*), all perversions of It. *passemezzo*, probably a variety of the *pavan* (a dance from Padua), the *capriole*, the *volta* or *lavolta* (also *lavalto*, *lavolto*, *levalto*, *levolto*, *lovalto*), anglicized as *lavolt*, the *coranto* (really a French name, *courante*, Italianized).[1] Shakespeare in *Henry V* (III. v. 32–3) mentions both these latter dances together:

> They bid us to the English dancing-schools,
> And teach lavoltas high and swift corantos.

Also the *bergamask* (It. *bergamasca*, from Bergamo), a rustic dance, is mentioned by Shakespeare (*Midsummer-Night's Dream*, v. i. 360, *bergomask*).

The *saltarello* is given as a 'synonym to 'gaillarde' by Morley (1597), but is mentioned chiefly in the eighteenth century, more or less at the same time with the *tarantella*, which had been popular in the South of Italy since the fifteenth century. In the eighteenth century there began the fashion for picturesque views of Italy, with Italian peasants dancing the *tarantella* in front of the ruins of some antique temple, in a Neapolitan landscape with umbrella-pines and possibly, in the foreground, a group of *lazzaroni* playing at *morra*, or of *banditti* dividing their booty.

In a famous passage of Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*

[1] *Coranto* (*coranta*, *caranto*) was also a variant of Fr. *courant*, a sheet of news (17th cent.).

(Lib. I, ch. xxxi) we find recorded the first appearance in England of the type of courtier-poet which was so common in Italy:

> In the latter end of the same kings [Henry VIII's] raigne sprong up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyat th'elder and Henry Earle of Surrey were the two chieftaines, who having travailed into Italie, and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie as novices newly crept out of the schooles of Dante, Arioste and Petrarch, they greatly pollished our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie . . .

Wyatt was the first to write English *sonnets* (It. *sonetto*, through French; the Italian word, in its turn, had been derived in a specific sense during the thirteenth century from Provençal *sonet*, designating the tune to which the words were originally sung); he imitated also the *terza rima* from Luigi Alamanni.[1] Petrarch's sonnets and *canzoni* (English singular also *canzon*) were sedulously imitated in England no less than in France; by the end of the sixteenth century love-poems were also called *passions*, for instance by Thomas Watson, in a way not different from the following use in Machiavelli's famous letter to Francesco Vettori:

> Ho un libro sotto, o Dante o Petrarca, o uno di questi poeti minori, come Tibullo, Ovidio e simili; leggo quelle loro amorose *passioni* e quelli loro *amori*.

Spenser called his sonnets *amoretti*.

A momentous event in the history of English poetry and music was the publication in 1588 of the *Musica Transalpina*, a collection of *Madrigales* translated out of many Italian authors. *Canzonets* or 'little short songs to three voices', and *villanelle*, the famous *villanelle alla Napoletana*, are mentioned by Morley at the end of the sixteenth century. By this time a first group of musical terms was borrowed from Italian: *bass*, *barytone*, *cadence* (through French; the Italian form *cadenza* came in only in the latter part of the

[1] The term *ottava rima* for the stanza of eight eleven-syllabled lines was introduced into England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first record given by the *O.E.D.* is from Shelley, 1820.

18th cent.), *concert* (or rather *consort*, as it was spelt until the Restoration owing to a confusion with this latter word), *fuge* (the first inst. of the spelling *fugue* is in Milton, 1667). The *pandora* or *pandura* (a Neapolitan form), the *theorbo* (also *theorba*), the *viol-de-gambo*, or *viola da gamba*, known also as *gamba* or *gambo* or *gambo violl*, the *arpsicord* or *harpsicord* or *harpsichord* (rather directly from It. *arpicordo* than from Fr. *harpechorde*), were musical instruments imported from Italy together with the tunes. The Italian name for the lever worked by the foot, in various musical instruments, the *pedal*, was recorded by Cotgrave in 1611 before this sense occurred in French.

While Petrarch's sonnets, canzoni and *sestine* (mentioned in Sidney's *Arcadia* as *sestine*, sing.; *sestina* was used later, in the 19th cent.) were imitated, Spenser was the first to call (in 1590) *canto* one of the divisions of a long poem, after Ariosto; the word, perhaps through a confusion of *canto*, 'corner', *canto*, 'song', *cantone*, 'corner', *canzone*, 'song', appears also as *canton* in early instances. The term *stanza* had been used by Shakespeare and Puttenham a short time before. The popularity of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is responsible for the currency of *paladin*, *rodomont*, *rodomontade* (also *rodomontado*), *hippogriff*.[1] A relative of the Ariostean Rodomont is the Spenserian *Braggadocchio*, the personification of Brag, Vainglory, formed after the analogy of Italian augmentatives in *-occhio*, *-occio*.[2] Berni's *rifacimento* of

[1] To Dante's popularity (from the beginning of the 19th cent.) the English vocabulary owes the use of *inferno*, for a place of torment or misery compared to (Dante's) hell.

[2] The resemblance to the old Modenese expression *far al braganoss*, 'to swagger', remains unexplained. See B. Migliorini, cit. p. 176 n. Another Italian name of an imaginary character, which became naturalized in England in the second half of the eighteenth century, is *Pococurante*, a word coined and used by Voltaire in *Candide*, and after him by Sterne (*Tristram Shandy*, vi. 20). Hence the entirely un-Italian use of the word in a case like the following one: *Saturday Review*, 9 July 1881, 'pleasant faculty of pococurante conversation', where the word means 'nonchalant'. We hear also of *pococurantish disposition*, and *pococurantism*. From the title of a sixteenth-century Italian 'silly

Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* caused that word to be introduced into England by the end of the eighteenth century.

Companies of Italian players and tumblers (*saltimbancoes*) are frequently recorded in England after 1573. They played both the popular *commedia dell'arte* and the literary comedy, this latter modelled on the Latin comic play. The *scenarios* of the *commedia dell'arte* were filled up by the actors with more or less *improvised* dialogue. It may be noted incidentally that *improvisatore, improviso,* were acquired to the English vocabulary only in the second half of the eighteenth century, when English travellers in Italy were struck by the vagrant extempore poets delivering verse or singing *stornelli*; the verb *to improvise* came by way of France in the nineteenth century. *Scenario* (a word for which Italian dictionaries do not give instances earlier than the late 17th cent.) was first adapted in English as *scenary* (Dryden), and appeared in the Italian form only in the eighties of last century.

The strolling players in *Hamlet* act *commedia dell'arte.* It has been shown that *scenarios* were before Shakespeare's mind when he wrote the *Tempest.* The scenes between Stephano and Trinculo (this latter name being possibly derived from a Neapolitan drinking song, as Croce suggested) read as actual translations from some Neapolitan farce. Also the figures of the two clowns or *buffoons,* Launce and Speed, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* derive from the *zanis* or servants of the *commedia dell'arte. Buffoon* occurs in early spellings in the Italian form *buffone* (the word *buffo* comes in

fairy tale', *Il Peregrinaggio di tre giovani figliuoli del re di Serendippo,* Horace Walpole coined the word *Serendipity* (see *O.E.D.*). Walpole may have read the book either in the French or in the English translation, both of which have *three princes* (as in Walpole's letter) instead of *three young sons of the king* in the title; but the form *Serendipity* corresponds to It. *Serendippo,* with an *e,* rather than to *Sarendip,* with an *a,* of the versions. Italian *novella* (a short story like the famous ones in the *Decameron*) is the ultimate source of English *novel* in the sense of 'a fictitious narrative of considerable length', in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often contrasted with a *romance,* as being shorter than this and having more relation to real life.

the 18th cent., with the comic opera); *zany* is found also in the forms *zanie, zanni,* plur. *zaneese. Harlequin* (*Harlicken*), though originally a French name adopted in England in a French form, became known through the Italian comedy. A curious later English use of the word as an adjective derives from the particoloured dress of the character: *Harlequin china, service, set.* 'A miserable zany', 'a mere harlequinade' are expressions in current use. Harlequin's opponent was *Scaramouch* (spellings, *scaramuzza, scaramoucha, scaramuchio, scaramuccio,* &c.: the extant form prevailed under the influence of Molière's Scaramouche); he became popular in England after the clever impersonation of the part by Tiberio Fiurelli, who took his company of Italian players to London in 1673. *Pantaloon* (occasionally spelt also *Pantalone*), the caricature of the Venetian *magnifico,* wearing typical bag-trousers, not only gave his name to any dotard, but also, at different periods, to garments of various styles for the legs, until *pantaloons* became debased into *pants* in the United States, and were adopted in the new form in the language of English shops for 'drawers' by the middle of last century. '*Pants* . . . a word not made for gentlemen but *gents*' —runs the contemptuous remark of one who wrote in 1846.[1] Other stock-characters of the *commedia dell'arte* were the *pedant,*[2] the *inamorato* (plur. *inamoratoes*), the *inamorata* (plur. *-atas*; this latter spelt also *inamoretta*; from the forms *enamorato, -a* was extracted the obsolete *enamorate*). I have little doubt that the use of these last words, beginning at the end of the sixteenth century, was a consequence of the popularity of the Italian comedy.[3] The type of the *inamorata*

[1] Sir Thomas Browne's passage (*Religio Medici*, Part I, sect. 41): 'The World to me is but a dream or mockshow, and we all therein but Pantalones and Anticks, to my severer contemplations', is thus commented upon by the Author: 'Pantalones, a *French* word for Anticks.'

[2] Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost,* III. i. 179.

[3] For instance, Thomas Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, speaks of 'all the doctors, zawnyes, pantaloons, harlakenes, in which the French, but especially the Italians, have been excellent', and considers that comedy should have in derision 'foolish inamorates' and 'Pantaloons that have unthrifty sons'.

was *Columbine*, who was later transferred to the English Pantomime or Harlequinade. There are also a few instances of the use of *amoroso*, *-a*, in seventeenth-century English.

The puppet-show, that 'instrument of strange motions' exhibited by Italian players in England as early as at least 1573, contributed to the English vocabulary of the second half of the seventeenth century the *punchinello* (in the form *polichinello* probably directly adapted from the Neapolitan *Polecenella*: various other forms recorded). The first mention is found in the diary of that great playgoer, Pepys (1666):

> I with my wife . . . by coach to Moorefields, and there saw 'Polichinello', which pleases me mightily.

Punchinello, shortened into *Punch*, became a general appellation for a short and thick person or thing; it was naturalized in the English Punch and Judy show, and in 1841 achieved immortality with the foundation of the well-known humorous weekly paper.[1]

Punch became for ever associated with humour. *Pasquino*, the famous Roman statue, gave his name to a kind of satire, the *pasquinade* (It. *pasquinata*); the form adopted in English, *pasquil*, goes back to It. *Pasquillo*, from which came also the humanistic Latin *Pasquillus* and French *Pasquille*.

Now we have travelled rather far from the Italianate Englishman and his adoption of the *Cortigiano* ideal of the complete gentleman, proficient in both arms and letters. The first English treatise of Fencing came from Italy, and from Italy there also came one of the first military treatises, Peter Whitehorne's *Arte of Warre*, 1560, a translation of Machiavelli's *Arte della Guerra*, which first suggested a new method of tactics. The study of modern artillery, on the other hand, dates from Leonardo da Vinci. Italian military engineers (*magistri tormentorum*) are found in England at a comparatively early date. English military literature in the

[1] In later times (end of the 18th cent.) puppets worked by means of strings were called in England with the Italian word *fantoccini*. It has been suggested that the name of a shadow pantomime (19th cent.), the *galanty show* (pronounced gala-nty), may be derived from Italian *galante*.

Renaissance, besides translations of Italian books, included a few English ones, which were mainly compilations from Italian sources. *Battalia* (spelt also *battaglio*), 'a large body of men in battle array' (whence *battaglione*, Eng. *battalion*), *campagna*[1] (also spelt more or less phonetically *campania*: the phrase *in campania* being used for 'in the field') in early use for *campaign* (from the French form), *squadron* (also *squadrone*), *besognio* or *bezonian* ('a raw recruit', It. *bisogno*, the original of Span. *bisoño*), *generalissimo*, are all derived from the Italian military language. *Calliper compasses* (It. *calibro*), being compasses for measuring the calibre of a bullet, are first mentioned in a book translated from the Italian, with an Appendix on the 'Properties, Office, and Dutie of a Gunner'.

Military terms of Italian origin were introduced into the English vocabulary mostly through the French medium. Such words are: *alarm* (as early as the 14th cent.),[2] *alert* (writers who use this word at the beginning of the 17th cent. are aware of its Italian origin), *arquebus—harquebus* (from Fr. *harquebuse*, *arquebuse*, originally *haquebute* from Dutch *haakbuse*, the insertion of the *r* being due to the influence of It. *archibuso*, which shows a popular etymology), *attack* (from Fr. *attaquer*, substituting *attacher* in the rendering of It. *attaccare* (*battaglia*)), *band* (the company of musicians attached to a regiment, found in this sense already in Machiavelli), *bastion*, *brigade*, *casemate* (a word which may derive either from Spanish or from Italian; a form like *casamatt* points to an Italian source), *cavalier* (a term of fortification, *cavaliero* in Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, 2nd Part, II. iv. 102),[3] *citadel* (also *çittadel*, It. *cittadella*), *colonel* (in the 16th cent. spelt *coronel*, after Fr. *coronnel* from It. *colonnello*: late in the 16th cent. *coronel* was supplanted in French literary usage by *colonnel*, and under this influence

[1] Now the Roman Campagna is usually understood by *Campagna*.

[2] The curious seventeenth-century etymology *all arm* can be paralleled with modern American *carry-all* for *carriole*.

[3] The following instance brings out the Italian influence: 1670, Cotton, 'He rais'd by the industry of an Italian Engineer, a Cavalier'.

and that of translations of Italian military treatises *colonel* also appeared in England *c.* 1580, though an undercurrent of popular use finally triumphed in the pronunciation after 1816), *curats* (an obsolete form for *cuirass* very frequent in the 16th cent. under the influence of It. *curazza*), *cannone* (an occasional spelling for *cannon*, from the French), *canteen*, *escarp* (the form *scarp* directly from the Italian), *escort*, *falconet* (also in the quasi-French form *fauconet*), *gabion*, *gianet(t)on* (a rare word for a kind of lance, It. *giannettone*), *guidon* (through the French, which accounts for the popular etymology evidenced in the spelling *guyd home*, as if from Fr. *guide-homme*), *infantry*, *mandilion*, *musket*, *parapet* (perhaps directly from the Italian: in Lancashire the word has taken the meaning of 'foot-pavement'), *partisan* or *partizan*, *pavis* (14th cent., apparently from the name of Pavia, where that kind of bucklers was originally made, but derived from the French with no notion of the Italian source), *pistol* (probably from a Czech word, which became identified with the pre-existing name of a dagger made in Pistoia), *ravelin*, *redoubt*, *scimitar* (adopted in the 16th cent. in various forms from different Romance languages), *sentinel*, *spontoon* (a later word designating the half-pike or halberd carried by infantry officers in the 18th cent., from about 1740), *vedette*. I have already noticed *salvo*. *Scope* is perhaps the most interesting among the words of this class. The immediate Italian source, *scopo*, like the Greek word from which it derived, meant 'a mark for shooting at, an aim, a purpose'. The early English use, side by side with senses coinciding with those the word had in Italian, developed the meanings of 'room for exercise, free course or play' (instance of 1534), and then of 'extent in space, large space', both of which are unknown in Italian.

The chief contribution of Italy to the English vocabulary lies in the terminology of the fine arts. We have already seen a few words relating to music; and we shall soon see many more introduced during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Italian architecture comes next to poetry and music for the importance of its influence in England, though

that influence was at first exerted through the medium of France and Holland. Even Serlio's book on architecture, which appeared in London in 1611, was translated from the Italian through the Dutch. Many Italian architectural terms occur in John Shute's treatise (the most important one in Elizabethan times) on *The first and chief groundes of architecture used in all the auncient and famous monyments*, &c., published in 1563. Shute had been sent to Italy in 1550 by the Duke of Northumberland to study there under the best architects. Also Inigo Jones, who was responsible for the introduction into England of Palladio's style (his *Architecture of Palladio* was published only in 1715) had received education in Italy. The very word *architecture*, which first occurs in the title of Shute's treatise, may be derived from the Italian, though the spelling seems to reproduce that of the French word. The same may be said for most of the following words, while in some cases both an Italianate and a French-like spelling occur. Occasionally a term goes back to its Latin source. We find, for instance, *cornice*, which represents the Italian spelling, side by side with *corniche*, *cornishe*, and *coronix*, *coronice*. *Anticamera*, *balcony* (spelt also *balcone*, *balcona*, *balconia*, *balconie*, &c.; accented on the second syllable till *c.* 1825), *campanile*, *cavetto*, *cupola* (found in a variety of forms: *coupolo*, *cupulo*, *cuppola*, &c., and even *cupilow*: the forms *cupelow—cupilo* are nowadays used in Sheffield to indicate a furnace for melting metals), *dado*, *loggia* (also *loggio*), *modillion* (and *modiglion*), *ovolo*, *portico*, *rotunda* (representing *la Rotonda*, the name given in Rome to the Pantheon, refashioned on Lat. *rotundus*, *-a*), *zocco* or *zoccolo*, are directly from the Italian. *Architrave* may be either Italian or French. The earlier forms of *soffit*, namely *soffita*, *soffeta*, *suffito*, &c., are Italian, the later, *sopheit*, *sofite*, *soffite*, &c., probably French. *Mez(z)anino*, *mezanini*, *mezaninis*, are direct borrowings, *mezzanine* is through French. *Curridore* occurs in the seventeenth century; the form *corridor* is from the French. The spelling *capitell*, prevalent in the seventeenth century, was influenced by It. *capitello*; *capital* is due to a confusion with the adjective *capital*.

Arcade (also *arcado* in Evelyn), *baluster* (already in the 17th cent. developing towards *banister*), *cartouche*, *colonnade*, *compartment*, *façade*, *festoon*, *model*, *niche*, *pilaster*, *socle*, have been transmitted through France. *Pedestal* is from French (*piédestal*) with the first syllable refashioned on Lat. *ped(em)*.

There are a few words the meaning of which has developed in English in directions entirely unknown to Italian. The most curious instance is afforded by *piazza*, which originally meant any open space surrounded by buildings (as, for instance, in Coryat, 1611: 'piazzaes or market places'); then, as Covent Garden had been planned by Inigo Jones on the lines of an Italian *piazza*, with colonnades on the north and east sides, the vulgar would apply the foreign name not to the square itself, but to the new feature of it, the covered galleries. G. Borrow, who, by the way, was a good enough linguist for his day, in his *Bible in Spain* has several amusing instances of this use:

> The great square or market place . . . surrounded by a heavy massive piazza. (Ch. xxi.)
>
> On all sides there were arched piazzas. (Ch. lv.)
>
> Whispering groups beneath the piazzas of the plaza(!) (Ch. xx.)

In the *Fraser's Magazine* for 1835 (xii. 362) Bologna is described as 'a piazzaed town; cold, dull, and monastic', i.e. the contrary of what it would be if *piazzaed* were taken in the original, i.e. the Italian sense. The limit is perhaps reached by Keats (*Lamia*, i. 212), who has columns gleaming 'in a far piazzian line'.[1] In Liverpool there is a portico near the landing-stage where, in times of slave-trade, slaves used to be tied to the rings fixed in the pillars: it is called *Goree's piazzas*. A further confusion is illustrated by the following passage:

> 1814, Sir R. Wilson, *Diary*: On descending I passed by the church of S. Maria del Monte and its magnificent corridor or piazza, on the declivity of a hill.

[1] A similar transposition of meaning is noticed in the word *avenue*, sometimes used of the trees alone, with disregard of the road they overshadow. For instance, Montague, *Rough Justice*, p. 174, 'Then he slipped off the barge and away up the avenued walk to Christ Church and the city.'

Here no Italian would speak of either a *corridor* or a *piazza*, but rather of a *portico*. Similarly, Gray in a letter of 1739, where he is speaking of Bologna, mentions the *corridore* leading up to the Madonna di San Luca: Italians call it a *portico*. In the United States by the end of the eighteenth century *piazza* was used in the sense of 'verandah of a house'. The expression

> 1796, Stedman, *Surinam*: When he makes his appearance under the piazza of his house,

sounds utterly ridiculous to an Italian ear. In D. H. Lawrence's *Plumed Serpent*, p. 118, we find:

> Her deep, shady verandah, or piazza, or corridor, looking out to the brilliant sun.

Hardly less peculiar is the English use of the later word *vista* (18th cent.) or *visto* (this latter form due to the greater frequency of the ending in *-o*, cf. *grotto*; *visto*, naturally, means in Italian a very different thing, a 'visa'). Originally meaning a 'view or prospect', especially one obtained through an avenue of trees or any other long and narrow opening, it came to indicate the very structure which afforded the view (e. g. 1756, Toldervy: 'cutting vistoes through the woods'; 1927, A. Huxley, *Jesting Pilate*, p. 71: 'long colonnaded vistas'; 1929, D. Garnett, *No Love*, p. 267: 'great avenues of trees planted in vistas reaching to the horizon'); then, in a transferred sense, a mental view or vision of a far-reaching nature:

> 1742, Young, *Night Thoughts*: . . . through the long visto of a thousand years.
>
> 1926, Montague, *Rough Justice*, p. 373: Along whatever vista of the past he looked, the figure of Victor stood at its far end.

The not very pretty *vistaed* occurs in such contexts as 'vistaed gas-lamps' (*O.E.D.*), i. e., I suppose, something like gas-lamps arranged 'in a far piazzian line', and: 'Up vistaed hopes I sped' (F. Thompson, *The Hound of Heaven*).

Among the decorations early used in English Renaissance buildings, for instance at Hampton Court, at Sutton Place (Surrey), &c., we find *terracotta* medallions imitated from

those of Northern Italy, chiefly Lombardy (the word *terra-cotta*, though, is first recorded in 1722), *terracotta* cupids, or, as such figures were occasionally called in England from the middle of the nineteenth century, *amorini* (or *amoretti*). Plaster-work (*stucco*) in ceilings and friezes was also due to Italian influence. Other kinds of plaster which begin to be mentioned by the end of the sixteenth century are *gesso* and *scagliola*: this latter is recorded chiefly after the mid-eighteenth century. That peculiar method of wall decoration called *graffito* is not mentioned in England by its Italian name before the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Porcelain is occasionally spelt *porcelana*, *porcellana*, during the sixteenth century. *Majolica*, also called *faience* (see p. 64) or *Raffaelle ware*, came to be known during the sixteenth century (*mezza-majolica* is a term used in modern treatises on pottery).

The terms of sculpture and painting introduced from the Italian are comparatively few. Painting flourished in eighteenth-century England under the influence of the Dutch rather than of the Italian masters. Italian *schizzo*, for instance, came to England in the second half of the seventeenth century through Dutch *schets*, hence the form *sketch*. From Haydocke's translation of Lomazzo's *Art of Painting* (1598) we learn that the English were then just beginning to appreciate painting. The first instance of the word *fresco* quoted by the *O.E.D.* is derived from that treatise. *Chiaro-scuro* (used also figuratively from the beginning of last century), *mezzotint* (used in the Italian sense of 'half-tint' from 1660 to 1788; the sense of 'a method of engraving on copper or steel plates for printing' is not of Italian, but of German, origin), *pastel* (in the sense of 'crayon', not of the 'drawing' itself, which is later), appear soon after the middle of the seventeenth century. Evelyn is perhaps the first to make abundant use of Italian terms relating to the fine arts: among these is *bolino*, which he uses also in the anglicized form (through French), *burin*. *Aquatint* or *aqua-tinta* (a hybrid word) is first recorded from one of the books of W. Gilpin, the prototype of 'picturesque' Dr. Syntax.

Among the colours, *giallolino* (or *Naples yellow*), and *incarnadine* (also *carnadine*), which occurs as a verb in a famous passage of *Macbeth* (II. ii. 62), denoting a much deeper hue than It. *incarnadino*. *Umber* (a form in which a combined Latin-Italian-French influence is discernible) appears in the sixteenth century. *Ultramarine* (*blue*) is also re-cast on Latin, though the use of *azzurro oltremarino* is of Italian origin. *Sienna*, elliptic for *terra di Siena*, belongs to the eighteenth century, *magenta* to the nineteenth (see later, p. 63).

Morbidezza, denoting the life-like delicacy of flesh-tints, seems to have been introduced early in the seventeenth century; later we find *relievo*, as a quality of painting, and, by the end of the eighteenth century, *impasto* (*impaste*, verb, perhaps from It. *impastare*, appears earlier). The term *nude* (and *the nude*) is more likely to reproduce It. *nudo* (*il nudo*) than the obsolete French form *nud*. *Studio*, the workroom of a painter, sculptor, and later of a photographer (now also *film studio*), and *replica*, are acquisitions of the beginning of last century. *Tondo* for 'a circular painting' has been used in recent times, first of all in connexion with Botticelli's and Michelangelo's paintings of that shape.

Most of the words relating to sculpture were introduced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such are: *bust* (*busto* occurs in Bargrave, 1662, De Foe, 1732, Richardson, 1754), *relievo* (and *alto-*, *basso-*, *mezzo-relievo*), *torso*. This latter comes in the wake of the fashion for antique sculpture started by the researches of Winckelmann.

The first *medal* with the portrait of an Englishman was made in Venice in 1480; the word appears in seventeenth-century authors, also in the Italianate form *medagle*, plur. *medagles*. The term *patina* (a film produced by oxydation on the surface of old bronze) is more likely to come from the Italian, where it was used in a transferred sense by painters already in the seventeenth century, than from the Latin. To-day it is employed also figuratively (e. g. 1929, P. Lubbock, *Shades of Eton*, p. 135: 'the patina of experience'). *Cameo*

and *intaglio* (also, erroneously, *intaglia*) appear by the middle of the seventeenth century. Some sixteenth-century forms of *cameo* are borrowed from French, others from Spanish. In 1622 Bargrave wrote:

> The cutt is certainly a very very ancient *intaglia* (as they use to call such cutts in Rome) . . . pronouncing it almost with a *ll—intallia.*

This shows that the word was by then new to English ears. It had occurred, however, in Evelyn in 1654. *Nicolo* (*niccolo*), a variety of onyx used for *intaglio*, is first recorded in the nineties of last century. *Figurine*, *tazza*, appear in the writings of modern antiquarians, where also the processes of *niello* and *tarsia* are frequently mentioned. *Filigrane* (probably through French) and *miniature* are already in use in the seventeenth century: the latter occurs for the first time in Evelyn.

A few words relating to the art of glass-making are *smalt*, *manganese*, *polverine*, *zaffre*: the first two perhaps through the French medium, the last one is found also in the Italianate forms *zaphara*, *saffera*. The brownish-coloured glass interspersed with small golden spangles called *aventurine* (through French, early 19th cent.) was first manufactured at Murano (It. *avventurino*). Neri's *Art of Glass* appeared in an English translation by Merret in 1662. The form *smalto*, in the sense of 'small cube of glass or enamel' used for mosaic work, occurs in the eighteenth century.

An interesting group of words connected with the fine arts refers to composition and style. *Attitude* (spelt *aptitude* until about 1710),[1] *group*, both through French, *profile*, come from the art of drawing. *Profile* offers a good illustration of what I said at the beginning about French-looking forms in English, to the effect that those forms are not necessarily indicative of a French source. Until about 1700 the French

[1] Here again English usage differs from the original Italian sense. *Attitude* in 'Fair attitude!' of Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn* cannot be rendered by Italian *attitudine*. The mother-word fails to see its own likeness in its offspring.

forms were *porfil*, *pourfil*. In Blount's *Glossographia* (1656) we find *profile* directly traced to It. *profilo*.[1] *Garb* is another word originally used with reference to artistic outline, either from It. *garbo* or from French *garbe* (later *galbe*) which derives from the Italian word; in the secondary senses (belonging only to the Italian word) of 'grace, style, manner' is found in Lyly and Shakespeare. Ben Jonson speaks (1599) of a *garb-master* as one who professes the art of polite behaviour. *Costume*, used by Italian artists for 'guise or habit' in artistic representation, passed into French and English early in the eighteenth century. In process of time it was applied to manner of dressing, wearing the hair, &c., and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, to 'dress': it was italicized up to about 1750. *Contrast*, in the original sense of *contrasto* (which also occurs), i. e. 'contention', was introduced about 1600 and, adversely criticized, soon became obsolete. It was reintroduced as a term of art *c.* 1700 to signify 'the juxtaposition of varied forms, colours, &c., so as to heighten up by comparison the effect of corresponding parts and of the whole composition'.

Antic was first used in the mid-sixteenth century in the sense of It. *grottesco*, which was introduced only a century later as *grotesque* (occasional 17th-cent. forms *crottesco*, *grot-(t)esco*). The term *grottesco* originated from the fantastic representations of hybrid forms found in the Roman excavations, especially in the Baths of Titus (vulgarly called *grotte*). From the ascription of grotesque works to the ancients (It. *antichi*, plural of *antico*), the term *antike*, *anticke*, was used in English to describe the character of those works; hence the meanings of 'bizarre', &c. In the seventeenth century *antic* was occasionally written *antique*, though it originated independently. *Caricatura* appears in English use earlier (in Sir Thomas Browne) than the French form *caricature* which supplanted it. *Burlesque* is a word having a cognate con-

[1] The *O.E.D.* states that *profilo* is the obsolete Italian form, and *proffilo* the one now in use. Evidently the *O.E.D.* writer relied too much on some antiquated Italian dictionary, since only *profilo* is current now. Also Weekley gives *proffilo* as the modern form.

notation in the field of literature.[1] It is also found occasionally referred to paintings, as in the following instance:

1712, Hughes in *Spectator*, no. 537, p. 2: Those burlesque Pictures which the Italians called Caricatura's.

Barocco, the Italian original of the English word *baroque* (through French) derives, as Croce has sufficiently proved,[2] from the name of one of the figures of the syllogism which had become typical of the crookedness of scholasticism, *baroco*; applied to criticize certain aspects of seventeenth-century Italian art, it conveyed the sense of 'being in bad taste'. The Italian term *concetto* (plur. *concetti* used in English) began to be adopted for far-fetched turns of thought at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Its sense had formerly been rendered with *conceit*. In a curious instance of 1561 (*Inventory of the Royal Wardrobe*) we find *concetti* as a synonym of 'grotesque work':

Item, twa paintit broddis the ane of the Muses and the ather of crotescque or conceptis.

By the end of the eighteenth century the vogue for the *picturesque* assumed in England the proportions of a craze. The word, which had appeared in England at the beginning of the century, bore marks of a Latin-French adaptation of It. *pittoresco*, which had existed since the seventeenth century in the sense of 'after the manner of painters'. Claude's and Salvator Rosa's Italian landscapes, with their ruins, shadowy gnarled trees, distant villages, and *banditti*, were mainly responsible for the special connotation *picturesque* acquired in connexion with landscape. Dr. Syntax, of the immortal *Tour in Search of the Picturesque*, was a *dilettante* (the Italian word became naturalized in England in the thirties of that 18th cent. which saw the building up of the famous English art collections); he went about with his *portfolio* (spelt in the 18th cent. also *porto folio*; the first element altered after Fr.

[1] *Travesty*, though owing its primary sense to Scarron's *Virgile Travesty en vers burlesques* which made the word known in England, is ultimately to be traced to It. *travestire*, 'to disguise'.

[2] *Storia della Età Barocca in Italia*, Bari, 1929, pp. 20 ff.

portefeuille) full of picturesque sketches. The affectation of eighteenth-century *dilettanti* can be illustrated by their use of needless Italian words; for instance, they would talk of *ritrattoes* for portraits. The *dilettante* had two elder brothers, the *curioso* and the *virtuoso*, this latter word perhaps made current by Evelyn, who used it several times. Richardson wrote in 1722 about Italy:

> The whole nation have a sort of love to what they call the Virtù, and know something of it.

Hence the peculiar English use of the Italian word in the sense of 'objects of art, curios', such as English people used to bring back home from their Grand Tour on the Continent:

> 1746, H. Walpole: My books, my *virtu*, and my other follies and amusements.

Two later words for connoisseur are *cognoscente* (the correspondent form in mod. It. is *conoscente*, but only *conoscitore* is now current in this sense) and *illuminato* (plur. *-oes*, but the plur. *illuminati* is the only extant form); the latter is often used satirically as in the first instance given by the *O.E.D.* (1816, Peacock, *Headlong Hall*) and in the following case:

> 1926, O. Williams, *Some Great English Novels*, p. 277: Such a passage in a Russian novelist would warrant ecstasies on the part of our illuminati.

Some eighteenth-century writers used the quasi-Italian *literato* as a singular for *literati*, which is really from the Latin, as the original form *illuminati*. In Italy *illuminato*, *-i* is not known in the English sense. About 1760 the term *macaroni* (see further, p. 62) designated in England a class of young men who had travelled on the Continent and affected continental, chiefly Italian, tastes and fashions (from the *Macaroni Club*, probably indicating the preference of the members for foreign cookery); the word became closely allied with *dilettante*, as is shown in the following instance:

1770, Foote, *Lame Lover*: Frederic is a bit of Macaroni and adores the soft Italian terminations in *a* . . . Yes, a delitanti all over.

Della Cruscanism was another affectation typical of certain Italianate English writers by the end of the eighteenth century. *Della Cruscans* were so called after the habit of a prominent member of this school, Mr. Robert Merry, to accompany his name with the description *Della Crusca,* from the Florentine Academy of which he had been elected a member.

By the middle of the seventeenth century the new kind of musical drama called *opera* had become exceedingly popular in Italy. The first mention of the word in English literature occurs in Evelyn's *Diary* (1644). Until the time of Mozart the opera consisted of a drama delivered in *recitativo*, interspersed with songs, dances, choruses. A minor sister of the opera, developed from the *intermezzo,* was the *burletta,* or musical farce, destined to become later the *opera buffa* (or *opera bouffe*, from the French ; a short comic opera was also called *operetta*). With the triumphant spread of Italian music throughout Europe, a number of Italian terms of music and singing were acquired by other languages. For some of them the *O.E.D.* gives comparatively early instances (*trill*, substantive, in Lovelace, 1649 ; verb, in Pepys, 1667–8), for others the instances provided do not occur before the second half of the eighteenth century ; but this is misleading, since those instances are generally taken from dictionaries which merely set out to explain words in current use among musicians. Technical words referring to music are of little significance except as showing that once Italy led the way in this art. Everybody is more or less familiar with the directions: *accelerando, adagio, allegretto, allegro, andante, andantino, arioso, brillante, calando, cantabile, capriccioso, con brio, con espressione, con fuoco, con spirito*, &c., *crescendo* (used also figuratively), *da capo, dal segno, diminuendo, flautato, forte, fortissimo, forte piano* (hence the name of the instrument, *pianoforte*, which at the outset used to be called *fortepiano*: apropos of this instrument one

speaks of the *sordine* and the *sostenente*, this latter being a contrivance for producing sustained notes as in an organ), *grave, largo, larghetto, legato, maestoso, moderato, ottava* (*alta, bassa*), *piano, pianissimo, pizzicato, presto*,[1] *prestissimo, rallentando, ritardando, scherzando, scherzandissimo, sciolto, semplice, sforzando, sostenuto, staccato* (used also in a transferred sense, of speech), *stringendo, tremolando, tutti, vibrato*; and the adverbs accompanying directions: *assai, ma non troppo, mezzo, molto, poco, sempre.* Some of these terms, like *adagio, grave, largo*, &c., were already used by Purcell in 1683; for others (e.g. *legato*) the first instances are much later. *Arpeggio, appoggiatura, concertante, tempo* (plur. *tempi*; *tempo rubato* in R. Browning) are witnessed for the eighteenth century; *contrapuntal* appears about the middle of last century; Vernon Lee, in *Studies on the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, 1907², p. 196, has *contrapuntic. Concerto, sonata, sonatina, oratorio, toccata, capriccio, extravaganza*,[2] *fantasia*,[3] *pastorale, scherzo, serenata* (the earlier, 17th-cent. form, *serenade*, through French; Milton, however, used *serenate*), *trio, quartetto* (obsolete for *quartet*), *quintette* (and *quintet*), *sestet, ritornello, finale, coda*, belong to the terminology of musical compositions. *Canto, canto fermo, cantata, aria, arietta, barcarole* (originally referred to the song of Venetian gondoliers), *coloratura* (and *colorature*),[4] *portamento solo, duo* (already recorded in 1590 as 'a song for 2 voyces'), *duetto* and *duet* (first half of the 18th cent.), *falsetto* (occasionally anglicized as *falset*), *sotto voce, mezza voce, cavatina* (first instance 1836), *solfeggio, tremolo, alto, basso, contralto, soprano,*

[1] As a conjurer's patter *presto* (*hey presto!*) was introduced by the end of the sixteenth century.

[2] Used also in the sense of 'extravagance' of language, behaviour, &c. For instance, *The Times*, 27 May 1927: 'There was, and had been, enough evidence, to which the extravaganzas discovered in Arcos had added only a humorous touch.'

[3] Also, a kind of Arab dance, and an exhibition of evolutions on horseback, according to the current use of the Italian word in the Levant and in North Africa.

[4] Notice the use of this word in Sinclair Lewis, *Dodsworth*, 1929, p. 375: 'my ducky little coloraturo (or is it coloratura) flat.'

countertenor (used during the 16–17th centuries to render It. *contratenore*), belong to the terminology of singing. *Impresario, maestro,*[1] *libretto* (plur. *libretti* and *-ettos*), *scena, prima donna* (*diva* for a distinguished female singer was introduced by the end of last century), *buffo, castrato* (plur. *-ati*), *figurante* (plur. *-ti, -tes*), *ballerina* (plur. *-ine, -inas*) are theatrical terms which became familiar owing to the popularity enjoyed by the opera. *Bravo* (*bravissimo*), the shout of Italian audiences, was naturalized abroad. *Bravura* indicated the excellence of the artist's performance, and was transferred in English to any passage or piece of music requiring *bravura* (e. g. 1822, W. Irving: 'the finest bravura of Rossini or Mozart'): it gave rise to the unattractive adjective *bravuraish*.

Among musical instruments, the Italian *oboe* came to the side of the earlier *hautboy* (from the French) during the eighteenth century, the *mandolin* was first played in England in 1707 by a Signor Conti, the *mandola* is first mentioned half a century later; other instruments are the *ocarina*, the *trombone*,[2] the *fagotto*, the *flauto*, the *flautino*, the *piccolo*, the *violone*, the *violoncello* or *cello* (the shortened form in use by the end of last century). The *accordion* and the *concertina* are not natives of Italy, though their names are partly Italian. The player of the flute is called *flautist*, after It. *flautista*; the player of the pianoforte in an orchestra, *cembalist* (from *cembalo* used in musical scores for *clavicembalo* for harpsichord or pianoforte parts).

A kind of entertainment consisting of music and dancing introduced in 1722 at the Opera House in the Haymarket was called the *ridotto* (also *ridotta*). Among the various activities to which *ridotti* (*ridotto*, literally a counterpart of Eng. *withdrawing-room*) were destined in Italy, gambling became a

[1] Even used in a sense near to *chef* by P. Morton Shand, *A Book of Food*, 1927, p. 235: 'Only an Italian *maestro* can make real *cassati* [i. e. *cassate*, a kind of hard ice-cream] and place the pistachios just in the right place.'

[2] In the sense of 'blunderbuss' used during the eighteenth century and by Borrow (*The Bible in Spain*).

prominent one. The *ridotto par excellence* was that of the Venetian aristocracy, where they played at *basset* (It. *bassetta*), *casino* (or *cassino*), &c. Card-games (*card* from It. *carta* through French *carte*) were introduced into Europe first by the Arabs of Spain, then by Italians. Among the oldest card-games, the *prima vista*, spelt in a variety of forms, even *primefisto*, *primofistula* (!), is mentioned by Greene in 1591.[1] The game of *taroc*, from It. *tarocchi* (whereas *tarot* is from French), is recorded in the eighteenth century. From Italy there came also the custom of *lotteries* (It. *lotteria*) or *lotto* (*loto*): the first English lottery was drawn in 1569. A kind of Italian lottery first recorded in the eighties of last century is the *tombola*. In chess one finds used the It. term *fianchetto*.

As for cookery, though an *Epulario or the Italian Banquet* disclosed as early as in the Elizabethan age the secrets of Italian cuisine, Italy's contribution cannot compare with that of France. *Macaroni* (now generally *macaroni-cheese* in England; *macaroon*, derived from the same word by way of France, is a small sweet cake), *vermicelli*, *spaghetti*, are fairly popular in English (and still more in American) cooking: true, the way in which they are dressed abroad is hardly calculated to please an Italian palate. *Risotto* and *polenta* (this latter word being used in the Italian sense from the 16th cent. on) are occasionally mentioned. In a fifteenth-century cookery-book *risotto* is called *rys lumbarde*; there are other old dishes called *lumbard*, as *leche lumbard*, *frutour lumbard*, *lombard pie*, whence *lumber-pie*, a savoury pie made of meat or fish and eggs, first recorded in 1656. The *zabaione* (erroneously spelt *zampaglione* by P. Morton Shand, op. cit., p. 231) is fairly well known. *Gelatine*, *candy*, *cervelat* (the corrupted form *saveloy* appearing for the first time in *Pickwick*) were transmitted through France. The *artichoke* was introduced into England during the reign of Henry VIII: apparently it had been brought to Florence from Naples in 1466. Owing to the northern Italian influence at the court of that king (see above, p. 39) it is understandable why the

[1] As a term of music *prima vista* means 'at first sight' (to play or sing *prima vista*).

English word should have been derived from the northern Italian forms *arcicioffo*, *arciciocco* (whence early *archecokk*, *archychock*), *articiocco* (*artichok*), all of them found in Florio. *Broccoli* (or *brocoli*, English plur. unchanged; *a broccoli*, *two broccoli*) may be a direct adaptation (first record in Evelyn), though it appears as *brocoli* in France already in 1560; *celery*, *rocket* (16th cent.), *cantaloup*, are through France. *Pistachio* occurs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in a variety of forms, some of them very near to Spanish. Italian kinds of sausages known in England are the *salame* and the *polony* or *pullony*, this latter being possibly a corruption of *Bologna*, a town renowned for its pork-butchers.[1] The early *marchpane* (through French) and the more recent *marzipan* (through German) ultimately go back to It. *marzapane*. *Sorbet* came by way of France. The curious name *tutti frutti* is given to a kind of ice-cream and to a sort of chewing-gum (U.S.). *Parmesan* (through French; evidence of use for the early 16th cent.), *gorgonzola*, are names of Italian cheese frequently heard in England. According to Morton Shand (op. cit., p. 254) *gorgonzola* is probably the most popular and widely exported cheese in the world. Among the wines and spirits, *chianti*, *marsala*, the *dry Martini*, the *maraschino*, a Dalmatian liqueur distilled from the *marasca*, and the *rosolio*.

I shall terminate this survey with lists of words derived from Italian place-names and personal names.

As for the former, we have already come across many: *volcano* (from the name of the southernmost among the Lipari islands), *milliner*, *bergamask*, *tarantula* and *tarantella*, *argosy*, *pavis*, *pistol*, *pozzolana*, *travertine*, *marsala*, *chianti*, *parmesan*, *gorgonzola*, *polony*, *sienna*, *magenta*. *Magenta* and *solferino* owe their names to the discovery of the brilliant crimson aniline dye taking place soon after the battles of Magenta and Solferino in 1859: there may be a connexion with the bright red colour of the trousers of the French zouaves who distinguished themselves on that occasion. *Bergamot* (from *Bergamo*) is the name of a tree of the orange and lemon kind, and of a woven fabric of tapestry. The

[1] Cf. the American interjection: 'Oh, bologny!' for 'trash, nonsense'.

name of *Bergamo* is also responsible for the Italian rendering of Turkish *beg-armūdi* (see above, p. 37). *Cantaloup* derives its name from *Cantalupo*, a former country-seat of the Pope near Rome. *Cremona* is found shortly for *Cremona violin*; sometimes confused with *cromorne*, a reed-stop in an organ, from German *krummhorn*, through French. *Faience*, from French *faïence*, commemorates *Faenza*, one of the chief seats of ceramic industry in the sixteenth century.[1] (*Majolica* was the early Italian name for the island of Maiorca.) *Jane*, a small silver coin mentioned by Chaucer, *geane* (treacle, wood, paper: 15th cent.), *jean* (a kind of fustian: 16th cent.), derive from the name of *Genoa*: *geane* is an English form, the other two are through French. *Genoa cake*, *Genoa velvet* (or absolutely *Genoa*, e. g. *O.E.D.* instance 1766: '2 pieces of black Genoa') are also to be recorded here. *Leghorn* (16th–17th cent. It. *Legorno*, now *Livorno*) was a name used at the beginning of last century for straw-plaited hats and bonnets imported from Leghorn (corresponding to French *chapeau de paille de Florence*, Eng. *tuscan hat*); the name is now used only to indicate a breed of domestic fowl. *Mantua*, a loose gown worn by women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is a corruption of Fr. *manteau* due to association with the name of the town which produced a kind of silk used for that type of garment. Similar cases are: perhaps *tureen*, an eighteenth-century form which superseded the earlier *terreen*, possibly under the influence of *Turin*; and *paduasoy*, an alteration of the earlier (17th cent.) *poudesoy* owing to confusion with *Padua say*, a kind of serge manufactured in Padua. From Padua derives also the name of the *pavan* (see above). *Padua* is also the name for a make of violin-strings. *Orvietan* comes through French (It. *orvietano*, from *Orvieto*). *Fustian of Naples* occurs in a variety of corrupted forms of which *fustian a-napes* is the most frequent, and *fustian and apes* (1627, Middleton) the most absurd. In the *Drapers' Dictionary*, quoted by the *O.E.D.*, it is said that

[1] Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia*, Bk. II, ch. 5, has: 'the same manner which the Italians observe in the fine earthern vessels of Faventia or Fuenca'. (Fuenca erroneously for Faença, i. e. Faenza).

'the product of that city became so firmly established in public repute that the term became corrupted and needed explanation'. The inverse corruption occurs in the forms *Jack-a-Napes, Jack-of-Napes,* for *Jackanapes,* originally an opprobrious nickname for William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, whose badge was a clog and chain, such as was attached to a tame ape (in a poem of 1449 Suffolk is styled 'the Apeclogge', after his badge). *Pisa,* for 'a Pisan dagger or poniard', occurs once in a play by Fletcher and Massinger (1625); *pisane* (various spellings) from Old French *Pisainne, pizane,* a piece of armour to protect the upper part of the chest and neck, is mentioned from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. The suggested derivation of the verb *roam* from *Rome* is unconvincing on phonetical grounds. *Tivoli* as a name given to music-halls was first used during the French Directoire, when a famous garden in Rue Saint-Lazare was open to the public under that name which suggested the amenities of Tibur. *Tripoli,* another name for 'rottenstone', comes from the Italian name of the town where that fine earth was found. *Calaber,* a kind of fur mentioned in *Piers Plowman,* and later the animal itself (17th cent.), is apparently from the French name of Calabria (*Calabre*). *Martello tower* records in a corrupted form (*martello* for *Mortella*) an action of the British fleet at Cape Mortella in Corsica, 1794. A recent instance:

> Huxley, *Jesting Pilate,* p. 214: White martello towers dotted along the coast.

A small spirit-lamp and boiler in one conical piece was called *etna* after the Sicilian volcano (first mention in 1832).

Aretine ware, Carrara marble, Neapolitan ice, Venetian blind, and *Florence cream,* this latter being a salad-dressing for which I hope that Florence is not responsible, may close this list. *Italian cloth, iron, warehouseman* may also be recorded.

Of all Italian personal names *Machiavel* was doubtless the most fertile in derivatives. I have illustrated elsewhere how the name became associated with the devil during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so as to be spelt, according to popular etymologies, *Mach-evill, Match-evil*; *Machiavellian*

was travestied into *Mach a villain*. *Machiavellian* became a synonym of *politic* in the worst sense of this word, i. e. 'cunning, astute, intriguing, unprincipled'. The word was lavishly used during the Renaissance, but is found also every now and then in contemporary authors. For instance, in E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908), ch. v, where an amateurish woman novelist, who has the habit of portraying her acquaintances in her novels, says:

> 'I intend to be unmerciful to the British tourist.'
>
> 'O you wicked woman!' cried Miss Bartlett. 'I am sure you are thinking of the Emersons.' Miss Lavish gave a Machiavellian smile.

Among names of musical instruments, *stradivarius*, *amati* (a violin by the *Amati* family which flourished in Cremona, 16–17th cent.), *spinet* (through Fr. *espinette*, probably from Giovanni *Spinetti* of Venice); as for paintings, &c., *bambocciade* (from the Italian nickname *Bamboccio* given to the painter Peter de Laer, It. *bambocciata*; through French), *Raffaelle ware*, may be recorded.

Sistine has been adopted from the Italian form, chiefly with reference to the *Cappella Sistina*. In Scotland *Andrea Ferrara* was the name of a broadsword from the famous sixteenth-century swordsmith of Belluno. *Aqua Tofana*, a poison, owes its name to the notorious seventeenth-century poisoner Giulia *Tofana*. *Frangipane* (*Frangipani*), *neroli* (Princess *Neroli*), *tontine* (Lorenzo *Tonti*), are from French. *Galvanism*, *volt*, *voltaic*, *marconigram*, are respectively from the names of Luigi *Galvani*, Alessandro *Volta*, Guglielmo *Marconi*; a kind of rose is called *manetti* after a botanist of Monza, Saverio *Manetti* (about the middle of last century).

From *Garibaldi* were derived the names of a blouse (at first red, then also of other colours) worn by English women after the famous Spedizione dei Mille, of a red fish of the Californian coast, of a kind of flat biscuit with currants (possibly owing to its having been invented at the time of Garibaldi's popularity: there may be also a hint at the dark red colour of the currants), and of a kind of hat like the one worn by Garibaldi.

MARIO PRAZ.

THOMAS PURNEY

A FORGOTTEN POET AND CRITIC OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

PAPLET and Soflin, Colly and Cubbin, Florey and little Dillinet, Lallet the Tender Shepherdess, Cuddleit, the Bashful Swain, country lads and lasses all, gathering and scattering flowers, love-making and playing at love in meadows and groves in Kent—strange company this to encounter in the pages of a forgotten poet, who gave two slim octavos to a neglectful world, when Pope was in the hey-day of his reputation, and formalism reigned supreme in poetry.

Thomas Purney made small stir in his own life-time; nor is this greatly to be wondered at, when one considers how little in keeping his pastorals were with the poetic tastes of his day. Subsequent ages have completely ignored him. Standard works of reference and text-books of literature make no mention of this early forerunner of the romantics, who worshipped at the shrines of Shakespeare and of Otway, and sang in simple verses of country life and ways. Unequal and halting his strains undoubtedly are; more remarkable for what they attempt than for what they achieve; and most remarkable of all, perhaps, to have sounded in the age in which they did. But whatever defects one may recognize among the unexpected beauties of Purney's poetry, are more than atoned for by the prefaces which accompany them. These remarkable essays, written in the poet's twenty-second year, show critical ripeness and originality of an unusual kind. Whether one considers his conception of 'the gloomy', and its place in literature, his vigorous attacks on the French critics, or his comprehensive schemes for the reform of critical method, one is equally astonished.

I

Our information about the life of Purney is unfortunately scanty. The name is a very uncommon one, and seems to have died out, as a search through present-day directories will show.

Thomas Purney was born on the 1st of August 1695. His birthplace has not so far been ascertained.[1] Information as to where he received his early education is lacking, but it is affirmed by the Secretary of the Merchant Taylors' School that he spent a year there before going to the University (see also Venn, *Alumn. Cantab.*). He matriculated at Cambridge in 1711, and was admitted as Pensioner to Clare Hall on 2 July of that year. He graduated in 1715–16. In the autumn of 1716 and early in 1717 he published two volumes of Pastorals. He took Holy Orders probably in 1718, and Venn records that he was priested in the diocese of London on 24 May 1719.

Up to this point the biography of Purney is a mere list of dates, but for the next seven years we have now fuller information.

On 10 November 1719, 'recommended by the rt. rev. Father in God, White Ld. Bp. of Peterborough, Mr. Justice Eyre, Rev. Dr. Laughton, Clare Hall, and several eminent citizens',[2] he applied for the post of Ordinary at Newgate. 'Randolph Ford clerk and curate and lecturer of St. Mary le Bow' was

[1] Nothing has so far been traced about the relatives of Thomas Purney in spite of a careful search in all sorts of likely and unlikely places. The name hardly ever occurs at all. Martha Purney, who married William Bardell, 11 Apr. 1700, may have been a relative of the poet [*Brit. Rec. Soc.* xxxiii, 177]. The Rev. Richard Purney, curate of Clifton, Beds., who was buried there in 1677 (Venn, *Alumn. Cantab.*), was possibly an uncle or a great uncle. Venn records that Richard Purney was a son of William Purney, yeoman, of Loughton, Bucks., and this may give a clue to the ancestry, and possibly to the birthplace of Thomas Purney. It is true that he describes himself as

'A Swain in Kentish Fields yfed'

but he nowhere states that he was born there.

[2] The writer is indebted to Mr. Thomas, Clerk of the Records at the Guildhall, whose unique knowledge of the Repertory, and the Minutes of the Court of Aldermen of the city of London, was generously placed

also a candidate. On November 17 Purney was appointed 'with such salary and such other profits as are thereunto due'. The salary was £35, and the other profits included the sale of freedoms of the city, 'the person admitted being approved and paying 46/8 to the Chamberlain for the citie's use'. Purney's predecessor had enjoyed this privilege once a year, and for the last three years of his term of office twice yearly. But the question came up for discussion in the Court of Aldermen, and Purney was only granted this favour thrice during his eight years as Ordinary (1720, 1725, 1727).

Another source of income was from the sale of pamphlets containing an account of the funeral sermons and executions of those condemned to the scaffold. Four of these, written by Purney, are in the British Museum, and twenty-two are in the Bodleian Library. There were probably more.[1]

It was a curious irony that sent the gentle poet of the countryside to the fever-stricken cells of Newgate and the horrors of the 'condemned hole' and the scaffold. Purney took the duties of his office seriously, and carried them out conscientiously in the face of difficulties, as the following letter (undated, but written some time in 1721) shows:

To the Right Honourable S^r^ William Stewart Knt
Lord Mayor of y^e^ City of London.

(1^st^) Whether it be proper that y^e^ Chappel of Newgate should be crowded sometimes with 100 or more Strangers tho' there is no part of y^e^ Chappel but what is alloted for those who belong to y^e^ Prison; which Strangers as they come purposely to gaze at y^e^ Condemned Men, stand up o're each others Backs, & often hang on y^e^ Posts & Beams, pointing & whispering, to y^e^ Confusion of y^e^ wretched Men to Dye, and to y^e^ Preventing of y^r^ serious Attention: several Boards in y^e^ Chappel being also broken down, by y^e^ Crowding and boistrous Behaviour. Besides

at his disposal when tracing the details of Purney's tenure of office at Newgate. The quotations on this and the following pages are taken from the Repertory and Minute Books. It may be added that Venn (our only authority for the life of Purney) fails to record his association with Newgate.

[1] Among the criminals executed while Purney was Ordinary were Jonathan Wilde, Jack Sheppard, Blueskin (Joseph Blake), and Capt. Massey.

which there is at y^e^ Door of y^e^ Chappel (which is a small place) a continued Noise & Swaring & rattling of Money, The Under-Turnkeys sometimes not giving Strangers y^r^ full Change, thinking they will not make a noise to disturbe y^e^ Service, And y^e^ Strangers also sometimes refusing to pay, having paid 6^d^ or a Shill: at y^e^ First Gate, & being there promised that for that Payment they should go into y^e^ Chappel: of this several have complained.

(2^nd^) Whether it be not proper that y^e^ Chappel of Newgate should be kept clean & sweet; especially at this time, when y^e^ Grand Jury (by Direction from His Majesty) weighing y^e^ eminent Danger we are in from y^e^ Plague so near Us, has Presented, among other things, y^e^ Cleansing y^e^ several Prisons of this great City, and chiefly y^e^ City and County Goal of Newgate; in order to prevent, with God's Blessing, that terrible Calamity from Laying Waste this Kingdom:

And whether it is possible to have a man to y^e^ Chappel, & y^e^ Pews, Outparts of y^e^ Chappel, Closet & Stairs leading to y^e^ Chappel in a tolerable Condition for 10^s^ per Ann^m^ which is y^e^ sum allow'd to y^e^ Minister for keeping those Places clean: Especially when (for want of a Convenience so high as y^e^ Chappel, 4 pair of Stairs) some of y^e^ Prisoners & Turnkeys sometimes make use of Bye-Places near y^e^ Chappel; by which means there is always at best an Ill Smell to y^e^ great Nuisance of those, & Danger from Infection who go to y^e^ said Chappel to worship God.

(Endorsed) The Ordinary of Newgate.

But the poet was not yet dead in Purney; and some time before 1723 he published what seems to have been his last work—'The Chevalier de St. George'. Possibly a copy of this poem survives on the dustier shelves of some library, but it has been sought for in vain. It was probably a political satire (cf. N. Amhurst, *Epistle from a Student of Oxford to the Chevalier*, 1717). Jacob mentions Purney's poem in the second edition of his *Poetical Register*, 1723, with the comment—'this piece is writ in an extraordinary style'—the only fragment of contemporary criticism of Purney that has so far rewarded a careful search.[1]

[1] A scornful allusion to Purney is, however, to be found in 'Con-

Purney's health began to give way; 'a Fit of Sickness' obliged him to go 'into the Country to reestablish his Health' in August 1724;[1] and on the 28th of September 1725 he wrote to the Court of Aldermen:

> Your petitioner hath carefully attended his duty at the Chappel of Newgate without any complaint having been offered against him. But the health of your pet. (as it hath pleased God) has thereby been much impaired: the expense wherof, and the necessity it put him under of Removing frequently into the country hath all along been very chargeable to him. . . . His Health is now so impaired by an inward or Hectick ffeaver that he has no longer hopes to recover it unless by dwelling in the country.

He asked leave to appoint a deputy, the Rev. James Guthrie, sharing his salary with him, and proposed to resign after two years. But his health did not improve; and his petition of 14 November 1727 states that he has been at great expense

gratulatory Verses to the Rev. Mr. Th. Wharton . . . occasion'd by the Death of the celebrated Mat. Prior, Esq.' Anon. 1722.

> 'O that kind Heav'n propitious to my Hope
> Would humble to the Dust that Upstart, *Pope*,
> *Young*, *Tickell*, *Congreve*, *Vanbrugh*, *Lansdown*, *Steele*;
> Then with the others you and I would deal.
> In Pastoral with *Purney* vie for Praise,
> Nor yield to *Rich*, nor *Taverner* the Bays.'

Professor J. A Rice, jun., kindly communicates another reference to Purney which he has found in *England's Ingratitude: or Jonathan Wild's Complaint*. Anon. Dublin. 1725. (B. M. 839. m. 23. (54).)

> 'Within the Confines of that dreary Cell,
> Where Terrors reign, and where no Comforts dwell!
> Where ghastly Visions, wretched Souls affright,
> And paint a dreadful Tyburn to the Sight;
> Where some in Tears lament, and others swear,
> While learned *Purney* makes a pious Prayer,
> Or while his Partner, fill'd with holy Qualms
> Devoutly hums o'er one of *Sternhold's* Psalms, ——'.

The last two lines probably refer to the Rev. James Wagstaff or the Rev. James Guthrie, who acted as deputies for Purney at various times during his illness.

[1] The Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts (J. Wagstaff), 28 Aug. 1724 (Bodl. B. 6. 17).

employing persons to read in the 'condemned hole' for a year and a half. He asks for a gratuity—'tis the last time he will trouble them'. He is desirous of surrendering, 'not being able to attend the duties of it any longer'.

A letter to the Lord Mayor from Purney of 28 November 1727 refers to

> those expenses which the Duty of my Place did not require of me which came to between 20 and 30£.

and in response to this appeal he was granted one freedom, 'but no further or other gratuity'. Guthrie, curate of St. Stephen's, was appointed in his stead, and the name of Purney appears no more in the Records.

Of the rest of his life nothing is known. It seems likely that he did not long survive the ravages of the 'inward or Hectick ffeaver'. Probably he lies in some quiet Kentish churchyard, perhaps not far from the gentle waters of the Eden, on whose banks he had spent his happiest hours.

II

The following list includes all of Purney's published works which have so far been traced. They are exceedingly scarce.

(1) Pastorals. After the Simple Manner of Theocritus. By Mr Purney. London: Printed for J. Brown at the *Black Swan* without *Temple-Bar*, and R. Burleigh, in *Amen-Corner*. 1717. Price One Shilling. 8° pp. 64.[1]

(2) Pastorals. viz. The Bashful Swain: and Beauty and

[1] In the British Museum, the Bodleian, Worcester College Library, Oxford, and the London Library. A copy was recently sold by Messrs. Pickering & Chatto, and another by Messrs. Dobell. Though dated 1717, this book was really published on 16 Nov. 1716, as an advertisement in the *Post Boy*, 15 Nov., shows: 'Tomorrow will be publish'd Pastorals . . . Where an Attempt is made to introduce into our Language a Dialect entirely Pastoral; having at once Rusticity, Softness and Simplicity; being what Rapin, Dacier and the French Criticks allow their Language uncapable of. By Mr. Purney. Printed for E. Curll . . . and J. Brown . . . and sold by R. Burleigh . . . Pr. 1*s*.' This announcement reappeared five times in the *Evening Post* and the *Post Man*. Curll's name is not on the title-page of the book. It was again advertised in the *Evening Post* for 13 Dec. and 15 Dec. 1716, the price being raised to 1*s*. 6*d*., on the grounds that the first edition was almost exhausted. A second edition

Simplicity. By Mr Purney. London. Printed by H. P. for Jonas Brown, at the Black Swan without Temple Bar. 1717. Price One Shilling. 8° pp. (xxii)+56.[1]

(3) The Chevalier de St. George, an Heroi-comical Poem in 6 Cantos. Printed for W. Chetwood. Price 1*s*. 1719.[2]

(4–28) The Ordinary of Newgate His Accounts of the Behaviour Confession and Last Dying words of . . . Printed by J. Applebee. Price 1½*d*.[3]

Doubtful.

(29) Preface (unsigned) to—The Last-Day. A Poem in XII Books, By the late J. Bulkeley, Esq; of Clare-Hall in Cambridge. . . . Printed for J. Peele, etc. London. 1720. 8° pp. xvi+389.[4]

In addition to the foregoing, Purney seems to have written a number of other works. 'I have performed', he says in the Advertisement to the Bashful Swain, 'to the utmost stretch

is stated to be in the press. Curll's name figures also in this advertisement. No copy of the second edition has so far been traced; the announcement of it was probably only a trick of the trade.

[1] In the Bodleian and the London Library. This volume was published on 14 Feb. 1717, as the solitary advertisement of that date in the *Post Man* states. Curll's name does not appear in this announcement.

[2] No copy has so far been traced. Referred to by Giles Jacobs in the second edition of his *Poetical Register*, 1723. Probably anonymous. Advertised five times in *The Mirrour* between 12 Feb. and 23 Apr. 1719, and also in *The Freethinker*, 5 June, 1719.

[3] Twenty-two of these—from 26 Oct. 1720 to 5 Jan. 1725—are in the Bodleian. Two of these are likewise in the British Museum, which also possesses another, not in the Bodleian, giving an account of the execution of the celebrated Capt. Massey. The conjectural date in the Museum Catalogue—1725 ?—is wrong, as Massey was committed to Newgate in 1722 (see *London Mercury*, 3 Mar. 1721–2), and was executed 26 July, 1723 (see *Weekly Journal, or Saturday Post*, 27 July, 1723). Another in the British Museum (24 May 1725), likewise not in the Bodleian, gives an account of the execution of the notorious Jonathan Wilde. In this account, and in that of 24 Sept. 1722, the Ordinary's name appears by a curious error as Thomas Puyney, and is so entered in the B. M. Catalogue without cross reference to Purney. The writer's attention has been drawn to these items by Professor J. A. Rice, jun., at the moment of going to press.

[4] Strong internal evidence, too lengthy to be given here, leaves little doubt in the writer's mind, that this preface was written by Purney.

of my humble Capacity in Epick, Tragick, and Pastoral Poetry . . . (tho' the latter only has yet appeared in Publick).' On the last page of the same volume he announces two forthcoming publications—

> Edward the Black Prince. A Poem. Book I. The whole to be comprised in 15 Books.
>
> An Inquiry into the true Nature of Pastoral.

Neither of these works seems to have appeared; and in default of the latter we are reduced to collecting his critical opinions from the Advertisements and Prefaces to his poems, in which they appear in a somewhat loose and scattered form. Of these documents the longest and most interesting is the Preface to the second volume of Pastorals. Its significance Purney seems to have realized himself.

> 'Tis not a flourish or spun-out thing; all the criticism is entirely new: and the foundation of the Science laid; which I think must be done before 'tis possible for Criticism to be brought to Perfection.

It is difficult to give a satisfactory account of this preface. It handles a great variety of topics; the matter is highly condensed and not very systematically arranged; as almost everything Purney has to say is of interest, the choice of quotations becomes embarrassing. A thread running through the whole is to be found in the attack on the French critics.

'The reaction against Neo-classicism set in about 1750,' writes Dr. A. F. B. Clark, in *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England*. This is true enough. But Purney, long before Warton, Kames, and Blair, levelled in 1717 his shafts against the neo-classic school. Ten years before Voltaire he attacked Le Bossu, whom Dryden had called 'the greatest of modern critics'. He poured unreserved ridicule on Rapin, of whom Dryden had said, he 'is alone sufficient, were all other critics lost, to teach anew the rules of writing'. Corneille, Dacier, Hedelin, are included in his onslaught, and the only critic he spares by his silence is Boileau. They 'have amused themselves by flourishing on the discoveries and hints given by others'. They 'dare not stir a step without leading strings'. ''Twere easy in 20 Lines to give all the Discoveries

they have made in their Art; omitting all their Flourishes, and all they have taken from Aristotle and Others.' As might be expected, however, in the work of so early a rebel against neo-classicism, his own thought shows here and there traces of their influence. He is only partially emancipated from the shackles of the rules and the *genres*. Even while attacking Le Bossu he seems tacitly to accept his view of the moral purpose of Epic. So that in criticism he stands midway between neo-classicism and romanticism, a lonely, unheeded figure, anticipating by some half a century the work of better-known writers.

His essay opens with an accusation of partiality in the French critics.

'It is evident enough the reputation of their Authors over Europe is owing to them. And had we so many such, to blaze our Writers Works, and open their ordinary Beauties, sure I think they would make a different Figure in Europe from what they do. Our *Milton*, *Shakespear*, *Otway* and the rest, would at least be known beyond the bounds of Britain. But a petty Enmity' separates critic from poet in England. 'Whereas the Criticks of France are so kindly natured, that they cannot see a Defect in their own Authors, nor a Beauty in those of another Nation.' French books are translated into English as soon as they appear. Ours are ignored in France. 'Their critics hardly ever mention an English writer. 'They would call it a Diminution to *Corneil* and to *Racine* to be put in compare with *Shakespear* and with *Otway*, tho' the Preference at last should fall on the *French*.'

The chief obstacle to the appreciation abroad of 'our Noblest Authors, is, Their Faults are Faults against the common known mechanick Rules of Poetry, as *Shakespear*'s Blemishes and *Otways* are against the Unity of Place, and mixing Comedy throughout, and the like; which are obvious to everyone: Whereas how few can take the Beauties of *Shakespear*, especially in the Sentiment, which is often indeed too clouded by the Language. The French, on the other hand, if they can't come up to our noblest Beauties, they learn from their *Criticks* to avoid our plainest Faults.'

Purney seems here influenced by Dryden.[1] An echo of Longinus follows. 'But yet give me a dozen faults, if there 's half as many noble Graces blended with 'em, before a Poem that 's as regular as insipid.'

No summary can do justice to the pages on Shakespeare that follow. They have been ignored by historians of Shakespeare criticism, and deserve to be quoted at some length. Purney first discusses the different treatment of character in French and English tragedy.

> Suppose Shakespear had given Corneil the Character of a fierce Savage Moor, such as *Othello*; Then told him, that to make his Temper chaufft and fermented by Jealousie would show such a Character in the finest Light; how think ye, even then, would *Corneil* have wrote the Play? We may guess from his own Performances. Would he have given us to see the Love between the Savage and the tender Lady as *Shakespear* has done, Or have drawn a charming Scene, where the honest old Love-story would have been finely talked over by 'em. How would the subtilness of *Iago* have been shewn in working up a furious *Warrior*? But worse yet, How would he have drawn the Strugglings of a great Soul between the fiercest Hatred and the tendrest Obligations to Love? I fear he must have told us *Othello* had such Contests in himself. How would he have described the roughest and most open Soul in the World biting in his Wrath, and dissembling before the tender *Desdemona*? I doubt a few Monologues would have supply'd the place of that. In short, would not *Corneil* have shewn the Grief of the innocent, surpriz'd and gentle *Desdemona* by a number of fine mournful Sentences between Her and a Confidant? Ay; and such a Scene would have raised a world of Pity in a *French* Audience.
>
> Such uncommon characters as *Othello*'s, *Macbeth*'s, *Hamlet*'s, *Jaffeir*'s, *Monomia*'s, &c., are the only difficult one's to draw, the only Ones that shine on the Stage, and the only Ones I could never find in the *French* Writers of Tragedy.

Only four years had elapsed since the performance of Addison's *Cato*, when this was written. It must have required some courage to fly so violently in the face of prevailing

[1] Shakespeare 'often obscures his meaning by his words, and sometimes makes it unintelligible'. Preface to 'Troilus and Cressida', *Dryden's Essays*, Ker, i. 224.

fashion. Purney obviously enjoyed writing this page; and no doubt it contributed—along with much else in the preface—to the damning of his book. Purney next develops his view of the function in tragedy of what he calls 'the Gloomy'. No previous critic, as he justly remarks, has dealt with this topic. He considers it a peculiarly English quality. His observations, written at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in which poets were to give themselves so largely to the cult of melancholy, have an almost prophetic significance.

> But there is a Species in Writing which seems natural to our Nation, and inconsistent with the *French* Vivacity; it has never yet been considered by any *Critick*, yet constitutes the Soul and Essence of Tragedy. I call this kind, the GLOOMY: And it consists oftner in the general scene or view than in the Sentiment: For Instance *Romeo* is wandring among the Trees, and anon espy's a glimering light at *Julia*'s Window. And in *King Lear*; we see *Lear* under a *Hovel* retired in the Night, while Thunder, Rain, and Lightning were abroad.
>
> All the Tragedys of *Shakespear* which we call good, abound with the *Gloomy*. And the want of it may be one great reason why *Corneil* and *Racine*, tho' they have so much Spirit in their expressions, tho' their Thoughts are so rarely vitious, and their Compositions agreable to the common and easiest Rules, yet want the Life, what shall I call it, the VIS TRAGICA, which appears in the good Tragedies of *Shakespear* and *Otway*.
>
> The *English*, as I have said, alone have Genius's fitted for the *Gloomy*. But as we never abounded much with *Criticks*, never has any entered into the Nature of it. Tho' sure it deserves an entire Discourse. And so sweetly amusing it is to the Soul, That 'twill shine thro' Language even ridiculous; and alone support a Sentiment.
>
> *Put out the Light, and then put out the Light.*
>
> The Language is a kind of Pun, and therefore to Minds that cannot take the Beauty of the Thought divested of it, the line appears absurd.

It is hardly necessary to pause here to insist on the value of this critical discovery. Purney applies it to the criticism of soliloquies, and puts his finger on one of the weakest spots of French classical tragedy.

> But the chief use of the GLOOMY (in the Sentiment) is in

Soliloquies; and would a Tragick-Writer be at pains to be Master of it, he need never write, at least, a bad one. The Soliloquies of *Corneil* and *Racine*, are only such, because the Person that utters 'em is alone. The Thoughts are exactly of the same kind with those in the *Dialogue* part of the *Play*; without *Solemnity* or *Gloominess*. But what a solemn Awe do *Shakespear*'s draw over the Mind. And some of Otway's, as in *Venice-Preserved*.

Jaffeir, on the *Rialto*.

I'm here; *and thus, the Shades of Night around me*, &c.

Act 2.

But Instances were endless; especially out of *Shakespear*. Yet 'twas the finess of his Imagination, that fill'd his Tragedys with the *Gloomy*; rather then his having 'ere sate down and consider'd the *Pleasures of the Imagination*, and then the fittest Methods to excite those Pleasures. He felt his own Mind most agreably amused, when 'ere the Gloomy overspread it; and most wrote (as was Ovid and Spenser's way) what most delighted him to write.

Purney next applies his principle of the Gloomy in the criticism of the unity of place.

The *French* Writers have this to offer for their wanting the Soul and Essence of Tragedy. They generally observe the Mechanick Rules, especially Unity of Place, which *Shakespear* always break's thro'. Now the *Gloomy*, as I said, is oftnest rais'd by the general Scene or View; by leading the Mind into secret Apartments, and private Places; as *Pierre* on the *Rialto every Night at twelve took* his *Evening's Walk of Meditation*. But if a *Play-Writer* would preserve the Unity of Place, it must be by laying his Scene in a Thorough-Fare, in a Palace Yard, before the Door of a House, or in a Publick Hall, as *Sophocles*, *Terence*, and the *French* Writers of Tragedy do. So that by cramping their Genius's by the observation of this Rule (which yet is necessary in the Representation) they cut themselves off from the chief Opportunity of introducing the Gloomy. And even in the Thought the Gloomy cannot with advantage appear, unless held up and supported by the Scene. How could this Thought have been supported in *Romeo* and *Juliet*

What light is that, which breaks from yonder Window, &c.

but by *Shakespear*'s leading us, with *Romeo*, into the secret Retirement of an Orchat?

Or what could have furnish'd *Othello*'s Soliloquy,

It is the Cause; It is the Cause, my Soul;
Let me not name it to you, ye chast Stars, &c.

had not *Shakespear* lead us into the Bed-Chamber of *Desdemona* in the Night-Time?

In short, if 'tis otherwise introduced, it must be out of the Action; as the Account of *Macbeth*'s Lady walking in her Sleep. And *Hotspur*'s Wife's relation of his talking in his Sleep with the thoughts and contrivance of a Rebellion. And the like.

But there are other grounds of objection to the unity of place.

I have often heard it controverted, since I have apply'd myself to Letters in earnest, whether a fine Genius is not crampt and deaden'd by the Rules? And if *Shakespear*, &c., would have wrote so well, had he been acquainted with *Aristotle* and the *Criticks*?

. . . 'Tis plain to me that some of the Rules are a Clog to Tragedy and Comedy. I shall say no more of Tragedy. Comedy has an equal Aversion to the Unity of Place. For it bears hard upon its very Essence, an enlivening and diverting Joy. *Terence* tyed himself to the observance of this Rule, as the *French* have done in Tragedy; but as they quitted for it the Soul of Tragedy, so he has let go the diverting part, which is the Soul of Comedy.

Besides, variety of scene is delightful for its own sake.

Suppose (tho' 'tis impossible) that the Poet could bring every delightful Scene, which his Fancy is desirous of, to his one single Spot of Ground (for our usual manner of confining the Scene to one Town or County is no Unity;[1] . . .) supposing this I say, yet by Unity of Place we lose the Pleasure of rambling into a Lady's Apartment, a Drawing-Room, a Chocolate-House, a delightful Grotto, &c. The Mind is always pleased in wildly roving unconfin'd; And to be tyed down to any one View or Prospect is almost as disagreeable as *Spenser*'s long Description of a Woman.

Purney, it will be noted, anticipates by some forty years

[1] Purney here flatly contradicts Dryden's more licentious view of the unity of place. 'There is a latitude to be allowed to it, as several places in the same town or city, or places adjacent to each other in the same county.' *Dryden's Essays*, Ker, i. 129.

the verdict of Dr. Johnson; he concludes his remarks on the unity of place by saying—

> 'The reason now of my advancing all this is, to show that the *French* writers of Tragedy are not superior to our *Shakespear* and *Otway*, tho' they have observ'd the Rules of Time and Place, which the latter have not done. Since there are Poems which won't admit of entire Regularity, and that the Drama stands in the number of those.

He digresses for a moment to Epic and Pastoral. In the drama the imagination is restrained by rules. In Epic, Pastoral, &c., it is not. If Ovid and Spenser had taken 'the pains of looking so far into *Criticism*, as to have compiled a regular and perfect Poem'; Ovid might have given us 'as many uncommon Descriptions, tho' not the same, and as many beautiful Surprizes in an Epick-Poem'. Spenser 'might have found opportunity of bringing into the same Poem all his Love and all his Pastoral Images, which we find in that wild and romantick Piece, his *Fairy-Queen*. . . . 'Tis true that in reducing their Storys and Descriptions to a regular Order, tending to one End and a moral Result, they must have bridled their Luxuriance of Fancy and not have wanton'd as they do; but this Force they might have turn'd to what would really shine in Poetry.'

It is the neo-classic side of Purney that is here speaking. His criticism of Spenser may be compared with Dryden's—'Spenser wanted only to have read the rules of Bossu'.[1] Purney, though he flouts Le Bossu repeatedly, has accepted, like his contemporaries, the principles involved in the famous definition of the Epic.[2]

He returns to the French critics, adding in a characteristically breathless parenthesis—'there are a hundred things which I must omit for want of room in this Preface'. He frankly admits their superiority to ours. But this state of things is not likely to be permanent. 'The coming Generation

[1] 'Dedication of the Æneis', *Dryden Essays*, Ker, ii. 220.

[2] 'L'Épopée est un discours inventé avec art, pour former les mœurs par des instructions deguisées sous les allegories d'une action importante, qui est racontée en vers d'une manière vraisemblable, divertissante et merveilleuse.'—Le Bossu, *Traité du Poème Épique*, I. iii.

will not lean their Heads on a French Footstool with the same consciencious Patience their Fathers in Poetry have done. Criticism seems to revive ; and those very Poets who run down the Science, yet take care to give the World the whole that they know of it.' The last sentence is perhaps a gibe at Pope.

The French critics avoid originality. 'They have only treated what was brought to, at least, a good perfection before.' Even in Epic and dramatic criticism, 'they have avoided everything which escaped Aristotle.' If they had wanted to perfect the science of criticism, they should

have gone to the Bottom and Foundation of it, by giving the World Discourses:

First. On the Nature and Constitution of the human Mind, and what Pleasures it is capable of receiving from Poetry.

Secondly. How that Pleasure might be best excited. And this must be shown by dividing all Poetry into two general Parts, *viz.* Image and Sentiment. . . . Then to divide, 1st the different kinds of Images ; which to my weak Judgement appear to be four ; *viz.* the Great ; the Beautiful ; the [1]Uncommon ; the Terrible. (For I speak, here of such only which are adapted to delight the Mind. Else the Horrid, the Filthy, *etc.*, consist as much in the Image). And to divide, 2d, the different kinds of Sentiments into their proper Classes. I cannot stay to mention which kinds belong equally to the Image and which are pertinent to the Sentiment only. But the kinds I think are these, 1. The *Sublime.* 2. The Bright or Brilliant. 3. The Satyrick or Biting. 4. The Mournful, Piteous, or Elegiack. 5. The Comick. 6. The Tender. 7. The Agreable. These should be also separated from the Vicious Thoughts, as the Refin'd, the Bombast, the Witty or Ambiguous, and too many to name in a cursory Preface.

Thirdly. To show the Rules how to arrive at Perfection in each of those Ways or kinds of Writing, and what it is that every one of them is form'd and constituted by.

This is, I think, the foundation of all *criticism.*

In the following paragraph Purney stresses the importance of the division of poetry into image and sentiment. The

[1] 'As the *Great* and the *Uncommon* both seem to produce the same Passion, viz.: Admiration, some may think they interfere ; but they are enough distinct.'

neglect of it 'has occasioned the greatest number of our Errors'.

> Thro' *Longinus*'s omitting this Distinction I could never attain to a perfect Notion of the Sublime, from reading his Essay upon it. Nor had I been able to judge infallibly of any passage to this hour, if I had not accidentially form'd this Distinction in my own mind. For the Rules by which we judge of a sublime *Image*, and those by which we know a *Sentiment* to be sublime, are as different, as the Rules of Tragedy and the Rules of Pastoral; but *Longinus* happen'd to blend them both together. For which reason, I will defye any Man in the World, after reading and understanding *Longinus*, to tell me at first sight whether a Passage is sublime or not.

A detailed commentary on these remarkable pages, which form the core of Purney's critical doctrine, is manifestly here impossible. The title of the first discourse for which he asks, implies the need of a new psychology on which to base a new aesthetic. This clear-sighted recognition of the inadequacy of existing critical foundations we may not unreasonably ascribe to the influence of Locke. Purney is obviously under the influence of Addison, to whose Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination he refers twice. (It is almost the only modern piece of criticism of which he writes with respect.) Equally obviously he resents the agnosticism of the Addisonian aesthetic, and the discourse which he demands as a necessary basis for any true progress in criticism presupposes an investigation of those very problems which Addison had refused to handle.[1]

He is influenced by Addison, too, in his classification of images. Addison had ascribed the pleasures of the imagination to three sources, the great, the uncommon, and the

[1] '—we know neither the nature of an idea, nor the substance of a human soul, which might help us to discover the conformity or disagreableness of the one to the other; and therefore, for want of such a light, all we can do in speculations of this kind, is to reflect on those operations of the soul that are most agreable, and to range, under their proper heads, what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind, without being able to trace out the several necessary and efficient causes from whence the pleasure or displeasure arises.' *Spectator*, 413.

beautiful. To these Purney adds a fourth—the terrible—and his insistence on this element, considered along with his doctrine of the gloomy, is significant of the romantic side of his mind, in a century in which the poetry of the graveyard and of night, and the novel of terror were yet unborn. The importance given to image and sentiment in poetry is also indicative of the nascent romantic in Purney. Alongside of this, there remains more than a little of the neo-classical spirit. The detailed classification of images and sentiments, and the desire for rules to show 'how to arrive at Perfection in each of those ways or kinds of Writing' are illustrative of this. Purney, who in the earlier part of his essay had dwelt on the hindrances of the rules to dramatic composition, here attempts to shape rules for poetry, which might in their turn become no less tyrannous than they.

What remains of the preface, though full of interesting detail, must be summarized more briefly. If the French critics

> would not have taken the Matter thus from the Bottom, they should, at least, have treated of those things which have been least touch'd upon; and which Aristotle has omitted. The chief of those are,
>
> *First.* The three last Kinds of Images; for *Longinus* has perhaps gone as far on the *Great* as they would be capable of going.
>
> *Secondly.* The *Gloomy*, which would have been a Subject for 'em entirely New. And many other things.

Or if they had been unwilling to break fresh ground they might have endeavoured to fill the gaps in Aristotle's treatment of Epic and Tragedy. Purney asks in the epic 'whether Pity (the finest Passion of all) should not be rais'd together with Admiration'; a question betraying that he had read his Aristotle through neo-classical spectacles. He suggests the need of a 'Discourse on Description carried thro' all the Species of Writing'. But the chief problem he wishes to have settled is 'whether there may not be many Kinds of Heroick Poems, and all as perfect as *Homer*'s, yet constituted entirely otherwise, and but a fourth part so long'. Perhaps he had *Paradise Regained* in mind.

Turning to tragedy, he propounds two more problems—'Whether the *English* or *French* end their Tragedys best, the first bloody the other not.

'Whether the Buskin'd Language, which most suppose proper for Tragedy, be so or not. For is not the commonest Language fittest, when we see two Persons actually talking together? And are not our minds drawn off too much in the Representation, to see the Thoughts easily thro' any other? The *Orphan* and *Venice Preserved* are in this way.'

III

Purney's observations on the Pastoral, though interesting and original, like everything he writes, are hardly of the same quality as his dramatic criticism. His views are certainly here more tinged with neo-classical error than elsewhere.

Rapin's *De Carmine Pastorali* had enjoyed since its publication in 1659 an unquestioned reputation. But it is for Rapin that Purney reserves his most scathing indictment. Rapin's name is coupled with that of Scaliger (the only Italian critic he mentions) as examples of critics 'who dare not stir a step without Leading-Strings'. 'You will easily excuse my not mentioning all his Defects and Errors in this Preface.' Rapin cannot make up his mind 'whether the long Description of the Cup, in *Theocritus*'s first *Idyll*, be right... because, says he, *Theocritus* has used long Descriptions, and Virgil not. But this is the Effect of a Criticks using his Eyes, instead of his Understanding.'

When we come to examine Purney's own views on the Pastoral we find them original enough. He states them picturesquely in the Advertisement to *The Bashful Swain*—

> When I first reflected on the Pastoral Poem, I lookt upon it as a slender Sketch, or Copy of Verses, incapable of any Justness, or any Regularity. But as I enter'd deeper into the Thought, I was surpriz'd to find it of a Nature susceptible of the greatest Ornaments of Heroick-Poetry, or Tragedy; viz. a just and delightful Story, Characters, Moral, &c.

He found confirmation of the truth of this in the judge-

ments of his friends which exactly squared with his own—(one wonders who they were).[1]

> For myself I shall aim, if Heaven allows me Life, not only to form each single Pastoral I give the world, a Regular, Consistent Poem; But so to order 'em, that when the Number of 'em is compleat, they may compose, if took together, one uniform and ample Poem, with a general Moral. So that each Pastoral may be either taken as a single Piece, or only constitute a part of the general Poem; being like one Book in an Epick, or an Act in a Tragick Piece. For nought to me is so amusing, as to see an Ample and right Great Design; in which the Mind may wildly wander, and at large expatiate.

What a medley have we here. Le Bossu's doctrine of moral purpose transferred oddly enough from Epic to Pastoral, a neo-classic conception of form, and within its boundary, romantic liberty of imagination. Let us compare the foregoing with the more formal statement of his theory of the Pastoral which Purney gives, in the preface to *The Bashful Swain*.

Here following his usual Socratic method he propounds three questions.

> *First.* What are the Passions to be excited by Pastory? As Aristotle hath determin'd the Question in Epick Poetry and Tragedy.

[1] Almost certainly one of his friends was the unfortunate John Bulkeley, who entered Clare Hall in 1713, and died of consumption at Kensington Gravel-Pits in Sept. 1718, aet. 24. (See Venn, *Alumn. Cantab.*, and the Preface to *The Last-Day*.) In addition to his lengthy Miltonic epic he wrote Letters to Dr. Clarke on Freedom and Necessity, and a short Latin poem, *Materia non potest cogitare*. This academic exercise is preserved in the Bodleian (Gough, *Camb.* 95. See also Preface to *The Last-Day*).

The Preface to *The Last-Day* has been ascribed to Purney (*ante*, p. 73). The poem itself shows signs of Purney's influence. Unusual words of which he is fond occur, such as streamulet, cade, and the verb to bay, meaning to bathe. The expressions 'Streams sky-painted', and 'the Stream painted with Flow'rs' (*The Last-Day*, Bk. II, p. 53), seem to echo Purney's

> 'a Rivolet
> Painted with Sky and Flow'rs'.

Secondly. Whether this Poem is not capable of the Perfection of Epick Poetry and Tragedy. Viz. one entire poetical Action; Manners, or Characters; a moral Result, &c.?

Thirdly. Whether the Pastorals of *Theocritus* and *Virgil* are not rather to be stiled Sketches or Draughts, of the Nature of Epigrams and Madrigals than regular and perfect Poems?

This curious attack on Theocritus and Virgil is linked up with his indictment of Rapin, who, 'takes it for granted that Theocritus and Virgil are infallible; and aims at nothing beyond showing the Rules which he thinks they observ'd. Facetious Head!'[1]

To his first volume of Pastorals Purney prefixed an 'Advertisement concerning the Language', in which he brings a host of authorities, ancient and modern, to support his use of archaic and dialect words. Among his citations it is amusing to encounter Pope's burlesque essay on Philips as a pastoral poet from the *Guardian* (no. 40), which Purney wrongly attributes to 'that excellent Judge of Poetry, M^r^ Addison', and from which he quotes quite seriously the most ludicrous passage:

> How beautiful, says he, is the old pastoral Ballad beginning thus:
>
> Rager, go fetch tha Kee, or else tha Zun
> Will quite be go, be fore c' have half a don.

Purney was apparently ignorant of the inner history of this ironical eulogy of Philips, which deceived Steele, and was published by him as a genuine encomium. The story is told in full in Johnson's *Life of Gay.*

The Advertisement is full of interesting observations. Homer, Virgil, Milton, and Spenser, 'changed as 'twere the vulgar Dress of their Words, yet left the main Body so as to be known'. Every good epic poet has used this device. 'And well knew Spenser that Pastoral still more required it. He has given us, in his *Fairy-Queen,* a new Language: the

[1] Purney was indeed ahead of the times. The scathing indictment of Rapin and the neo-classical system of criticism in Professor Saintsbury's *History of Criticism,* ii. 313, is on similar lines.

Reason must be, because his Scene lyes in a new Place. But how much more has he done it in his Pastorals.'

Purney in his own poems

> where the Phrase in use was not suited to the Softness and Simplicity of his *Characters*, as he is acquainted with the Dialect of most Counties in *England*, has from thence drawn the tenderest Expressions, as he thought, and best adapted to the Simplicity of his Sentiments.

The result is a linguistic gallimaufry reminiscent of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and of comparatively little value to the student of dialect.

Purney returns to the subject of pastoral language in the Advertisement to his second volume.

> What a vast Constraint are Pastoral-Writers under in whatever they express; No Phraze must be admitted till enervated and wholly void of *Strength*. As for the Words, *Admit*, *Deride*, *Condemn*, and all as strong as they, I should dare as soon to use the words *Elliptical*, or *Epicycle*, as any such in Pastoral.

The beauties of pastoral poetry do not all reveal themselves on the first perusal. He warns the reader not to turn his pages over in search of 'strong Lines'. If he does so, he will be disappointed; and will 'pass o're fifty Beauties for every one he discovers. He will often wish we had propos'd our Thoughts, and kept our Pastoral-Language to ourselves; but after a while the finest and the softest Sentiment will seem insipid, if not deckt in the lovely Simplicity of such a Dress'.

It has seemed desirable to quote thus extensively from the criticism of Purney, partly because of its inaccessibility (only two copies of *The Bashful Swain* are known to exist), and partly because no summary could possibly do justice to the quaintness of phrase of the original.

There is some evidence of hasty composition in the preface to *The Bashful Swain*. Misspelling of proper names is frequent. Juliet is Julia, Monimia is Monomia, Rapin becomes Rapine, and Corneille is invariably docked of his last two letters. (Possibly for these errors the compositor was to blame.) Shakespeare is misquoted twice. The style

too is hasty, and at times obscure. Purney seems to have been too much concerned with what he had to say, to trouble very much about how he said it. The substance of the essay, however, gives evidence of mature deliberation, all the more remarkable when we consider the writer's age. It is the privilege of youth to outline daring schemes and entertain vast projects. One may without injustice to Purney question his ability to fill in the whole of the framework he erected; nor indeed does he anywhere indicate his intention of attempting to do so. We must, nevertheless, give him credit for astonishing clearness of critical vision. He was obviously profoundly dissatisfied with the barren traditionalism which still dominated critical thought in 1717. Purney's protests sounded in deaf ears. His was the unkindest fate that can overtake an unsuccessful prophet. He was not stoned in the market-place. That implies at least notoriety. No one listened to him; and the great Augustan age rolled on.

Yet Purney's claim as a critic is not merely a negative one. For slavish devotion to the letter rather than the spirit of the classics, he was striving to substitute something better. His plans for the reformation of criticism were far reaching and comprehensive, and revealed the essential weakness in the impressionistic aesthetic of Addison. His discovery of the significance of 'the Gloomy', his discriminating appreciation of Shakespeare, his contribution to comparative criticism, then in its infancy, are all of them important. If at times his own critical efforts show traces of the errors and limitations of the neo-classicists he attacks, after all this was only to be expected. No man can escape altogether from his age.

But what strikes one most of all in reading Purney's criticism is, neither his scheme for the reform of critical method, nor his discovery of the importance of melancholy, but the presence of a certain quality of enthusiasm. One notices it most perhaps in the pages upon Shakespeare. It is the last thing we expect to find in a contemporary of Addison. This ardent appreciation, this whole-hearted delight in

great poetry, is more than a mere quality of youth. It is something alien to his age. It is the most romantic quality, when all is said, in the criticism of Purney.

IV

With this clue of sentiment to guide us, we turn to what must be a hurried survey of the poems. Here again we are struck, amid all their imperfections, by certain unexpected qualities. Love of nature, sensitiveness to beauty, tenderness and warmth of feeling, freshness of language—these are the key-notes of Purney's poetry. The language indeed is marred by a clumsy assumption of dialect, the metre is in places harsh and rugged, and the rhymes, by some extraordinary eccentricity on the part of the poet, are often deliberately out of tune. Defects of characterization, over-laboured situations, and passages in which the style descends to what Purney himself would call 'the Insipid, the Mean and Common', are also to be found. But the reader who perseveres will be rewarded by the discovery of much that has idyllic freshness and charm.

This idyllic beauty is to be seen in the descriptions of nature. Purney aims, he tells us, at 'describing the Country and its sweetness'. Nature in his poems always wears a rustic dress. His flowers are always wild flowers; and he takes us far away from the formal garden of Augustan poetry, to the dewy meadows and shaded banks where they grow.

> A Cave there is by Idle Hill,
> Ye know the Place where Shepherds loll,
> There Fauney often goes I guess
> To hear the Lark, or toy with Lass.
> A Sweetbrier dainty o're it spread
> That Roses bore and cast a Shade.
> Abie it ran a Rivolet
> Painted with Sky and Flowers so sweet.
> Through Boughs the Moonlight fair beseen
> Sweet checkerèd the grassie Green.

Or again:

'Mongst many a Breer and many a Tree
Which dusk'd in Gloom Moon's waining Ray,
A Stream half closed a Plat of Grass,
And made a sweet, a pleasant Place.

It is in scenes such as these that Purney places his country girls. He describes them in the freshness and sweetness of their youth, like flowers that have sprung up in the grass. And it is to flowers that he oftenest compares their budding beauty. Paplet is 'like a Rosie sweet', like 'a Lilly on a Heap of Roses strowed'. She is 'fair as flow'rie Green', and 'as soft as Summer Day'. Soflin, her friend, is 'Ripe as Rose' and 'as sweet as Breath of Morn is sweet'. The two girls are linked together in a beautiful couplet.

Soflin was fair as Morning Drop is fair,
And Paplet tender as the Evening Air.

We find them together more than once in these pastorals, and always in some scene of natural beauty, of which their own seems but a part.

A Willow on a Bank upheld their Heads,
(Oh happy Tree to hold such lovely Maids),
A soothing Shade the rosie Sweetbreer gave,
Where sang the Bird that sings so soft at Eve.

And again,

Soft as a Lover's Sighs, and Sweet to see
As smiling Mouth of pretty Mey;
Their lovely Limbs the Lasses fair outspread
All on the Softness of the Mead.
The Evening Breeze (ah happy Evening Breeze!)
Sweet with their Honey-hair yplays.
Breath'd on their Necks, and in their Bosoms went.
I-faith, I can but think upon't.

Paplet lays her head in Soflin's lap.

— The while, the tender-touching Air
Flutter'd the Florets out her Hair.
With Pancet, Perewincle, and Dew-cup,
Sweetly her Hair was braided up.
But sprinkled now around 'em lay the Flowers,
Lovely as Fall of Summer Showers.

Unlike Spenser, who has no female characters in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, Purney is much less interested in his lads than in his lasses; and—this is in the best pastoral tradition—he is more concerned about their love-affairs than their sheep. Perhaps he would have agreed with Dr. Johnson, that the details of the pastoral occupation cannot be described in poetry because they are too disgusting; in any case he hardly ever touches upon this side of rural life. Once or twice he speaks casually of hunting (curiously enough with bow and arrows), but the chief occupations seem to be gathering flowers and making love. Love is the main theme of the poems. The plot, or fable, is of the slenderest description. Each of the four Pastorals contributes to the development of the story, which tells of the loves of Paplet and Soflin for Collikin. To this the adventures of Lallet in the second Pastoral form a sort of contributory episode.

Love is a gentle Pain, a pretty Pain.

The passion never rises to tragic intensity in these Idylls. Purney describes with gentle pity, in his first Pastoral, the grief of Paplet at the dawn of her love for Collikin.

> The dainty-limb'd Lass, as soft to see,
> As springing Flowrets in the Month of May,
> Smooth laid her slender *Features* down again,
> All on the Sweetness of the Flowerie Plain.
> Ah gentle *Heart*! ah *Heart* of Prettiness!
> Where is the Dalliance, and the tender Kiss.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Thus sate the *Youngling-Mey*, till far the Night
> Was spent, and sooth the Moon nigh lost her Light,
> Then up gan rise; but 'ere she 'gan up rise,
> Tuck'd up her Hair, and wiped her dewie Eyes.

The sorrow of Lallet on her accidental separation from Fauney is the theme of the second Pastoral; but the lovers are reunited at the close. Even when Soflin's sweetheart, Collikin, transfers his affections to Paplet, in the fourth Pastoral, the tender scene between the two girls is subdued to that level of gentle emotion which Purney considered proper for 'Pastory'. For the most part, however, it is the

happiness of lovers, their delight in one another, that he depicts; and into the thin tissue of these love-scenes the beauty of nature is interwoven.

> I have to hide from Heat, a Balmy Bowr
> With many a Floret shaded o'er.
> In it 's a Rose-heap, soft as Linnet's-Lip ;
> There loose I lay my Limbs to sleep.
> At Eve he'll come, and call me to the Grove ;
> And hold me as I were his Love.
> 'Arise, my Dove! my Fair One! See, the Shade
> Comes on ; the Linnet's Tongue is laid.'

Love is depicted by Purney with a curious mixture of voluptuousness and *naïveté*. Sometimes it is the beauty of a girl's body which captures his imagination—sometimes an amorous caress that is realistically recorded.

> The dabling Dew fell all among
> Her buding Breasts so fair and young :
> Her buding Breasts that bloomie grew
> Soft Shrinkéd at the dabling Dew.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> He stroak'd her Locks all wet with Mist,
> Out Bosom, then her Bosom kist.
> Why sooth 'twas soft as Bird in Bush,
> He kist so soft, and bade not blush.

The *naïveté* is pervasive, and in consequence less easy to illustrate. Cuddleit, 'the little lad that has white ringlet Hair', loves Paplet, but is ashamed to tell. When he sleeps in the room next to hers:

> As oft as stir'd the gentle-breathing Lass
> So oft he'd cling to th' Wall, so often kiss't.

Paplet and Soflin are talking together at the beginning of the first Pastoral. ('All young was Paplet and ignorant of Love; Soflin more experienced, but equally tender and innocent.') Soflin tells her it is unseemly to cling to a lad, except when frightened.

> You mayn't hug Men, if be you fearen nought ;

and adds naïvely that when she is with Collikin she fre-

quently pretends to be afraid when she is not. Purney loves thus to shows the difference between a girl's real thoughts and feelings, and the harmless wiles and reticences with which she cloaks them from her lover. Fauney is caressing Lallet in a grove.

> Sooth now the Lass gan like a Kiss;
> But claps her dimple Cheek to his,
> And whispers soft, Much marl I how,
> Fauney, thou can'st love kissing so.

'If we would copy nature', wrote Pope in 1709, 'it may be useful to take this idea along with us, that pastoral is an image of what they call the golden age. So that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceived then to have been.'

Purney, like Gay, turns his back on these precepts. He abandons the golden age for English country life of his own day. His painting of rural manners has a freshness that can only come from living models. Collikin and Paplet who make love on the banks of the Eden, are not even distant cousins of the Strephons and Chloes of the conventional idyll. They are drawn from life. Purney confesses that he writes from personal experience; and the pastorals contain in the person of Cubbin a curious portrait of the poet himself:

> A gentle Swain yfed in Kentish Mead,
> The gentlest Swain that ever Flock did feed.

He has a passion for rhyming. He scrawls his verses with his crook on the sandy bank of the Eden, and, Orlando-like, has

> found means to mark
> His witless tattle on a Maple's Bark.

He listens to the talk of the peasant girls and records it. Indeed Paplet complains that

> — he often skulks a-hind a Balk,
> To hear the harmless Shepherdess in Talk,
> Then tells the Chat to Sparks at the great Town.
> Who maken Mock at Speech of simple Clown.

The country girls have bought him a pipe,

> To busy him, and keep from kissing so.

He toys with many girls but seems specially attached to none. Paplet describes him as

> The Swain that whispers us in Ear
> That he can sing, then snatches a quick Kiss.

One gets a pleasant enough picture of this young Cambridge student, whiling away his vacations in Kent, in love with nature, with poetry, and with youth, playing harmlessly enough with the fresh country girls, who only half understand his interest in the literary circles of London. For all his amorousness he has a champion in Soflin:

> I know the Swain, who sooths so soft as he!
> Believe me, Lass, he'll never harm sweet Mey.

But the trait in Purney's character that impresses one most is not amorousness, but pity. He sympathizes with his peasant girls in all their distresses; and interrupts the crisis of the action in his fourth pastoral with:

> I-sooth it makes me cry to tell!

He feels profoundly for the grief of Lallet:

> Heav'd the Swain's Breast with Pity oft,
> Unhappy Swain, to be so soft!
> Achéd his Heart, to hear her Smart,
> Unhappy Swain, to have such Heart!

Indeed the degree of his sympathy is so ill proportioned to the importance of the event, that one feels tempted to say of Purney—a precursor in so many other ways—that he anticipates in a measure the sensibility of Sterne.

Purney, it is obvious, has taken Spenser as his chief model. He imitates his half-archaic, half-dialectic vocabulary. Once or twice there is direct verbal reminiscence, as in 'the daintie Daughter of the Glen'. Purney is not, however, much of a borrower, apart from this, and from one or two lines which echo the Song of Songs, notably in the Singing Match in the second Pastoral. There is hardly a trace, and this is surely remarkable, of the poetic diction of his day.

He shares Spenser's pagan delight in the body, and a warm glow of sensuousness suffuses the pages of both poets with a sort of golden summer haze. Unlike Spenser, however, he

does not regard the Pastoral as a poetical hold-all into which anything can be crammed. There is no hint of a personal love-story in these poems, no didactic element, no social, political, or religious satire; nothing but gentle pictures of country life and country folk. He is even more a poet of youth than Spenser. There are no old people among his characters. Purney's work bears little resemblance to the contemporary pastorals of Pope, Philips, and Gay. Gay comes nearest to him. But the half-burlesque, half-cynical realism of 'The Shepherd's Week' shows something of a townsman's disgust with rural life, while Purney is wholeheartedly in love with the country. The motto from Theocritus on the title-page of his first volume is aptly chosen:

Παντᾶ ἔαρ, παντᾶ δὲ νομοί, παντᾶ δὲ γάλακτος
οὔθατα πλήθουσιν, καὶ τὰ νέα τρέφεται.

The more than Pre-Raphaelite freedom with which Purney treats his rhymes has already perhaps been sufficiently illustrated by the quotations; but a few of the more outrageous examples are added. Thus he rhymes:—*fair, grasshopper; swains, meseems; breast, lass; stands, chance; befall, nightingale; face, eagerness; sweet, violet.* He frequently repeats the same word at the end of two lines. These liberties are obviously intentional, and were perhaps introduced to give a certain bucolic roughness to the verse. The *rime riche* often gives a simple charm, but the imperfect rhymes are frequently harsh and unpleasing. Purney is fond of alliteration and uses it very happily. To these effects he often adds the chiming repetition of a word in the middle of a line. The first Pastoral is in heroic couplets, which, however, bear little resemblance to those of Dryden and Pope. The caesura is treated freely, and overflow is fairly common. The second Pastoral is in octosyllables, the third in stanza form (two octosyllabic couplets followed by a heroic couplet), and the fourth is in couplets consisting of a five-beat line followed by one of four. In this measure Purney achieves some of his happiest effects.[1] The versification throughout

[1] For illustrations see pp. 90 and 92.

is treated with the utmost freedom, degenerating only too often into unmusical licence. Purney's revolt against Augustan formalism carried him too far.

His vocabulary is very simple. There are astonishingly few traces of the poetic diction of his day. He avoids the 'strong lines', the terse and serried phrasing of his contemporaries. The style is deliberately diffuse, and this, aided by the repetitions already mentioned, gives it a charming simplicity. Imagery is freely used and is always drawn from rural sources.

We can divine from the Pastorals the answers Purney would probably have given to the questions he propounds in his preface. Pity is obviously the chief passion 'to be excited by Pastory'. But it differs from the feeling awakened in us by Epic or Tragedy. It is softer, gentler, and lacks the intensity of epic or tragic emotion. To Pity, Purney would probably have added Admiration.

True Pastoral, it is evident, in Purney's view, should confine itself to 'one entire poetical Action, having a moral Result'. This, neither Theocritus, Virgil, Spenser, nor 'the contemporary British Swains' had attempted to do. Spenser comes nearest with the story of the love of Colin Clout for Rosalind, but many sections of his poem make no reference to either. How far Purney's conception of the pastoral was suggested by the Arcadian romance or the pastoral drama is a question difficult to determine. It seems, on the whole, improbable that he owed much to either.[1] His attempt to confine the *genre* to stricter rules is surprising. Ancients and moderns had alike left the pastoral free, but Purney seeks to bind it in pseudo-Aristotelian chains. It is curious to find him, for all his romantic tendencies, in this matter, more classical than the classics themselves.

This blending of neo-classic with romantic tendencies is, as we have seen, typical of Purney both as critic and poet. Nor

[1] Purney appears to have been ignorant of Italian, and nowhere refers to their pastoral writers. In the announcement of his *Enquiry into the true Nature of Pastoral* he proposes only to discuss 'Theocritus, Virgil, Spenser, and our contemporary Writers of Pastorals'.

is it difficult to discern on which side the emphasis falls. We have long thought of Thomson, Gray, Collins, and the rest as gradually and diffidently freeing themselves from the poetic limitations of their time; of the later eighteenth-century critics as slowly shaking the yoke of neo-classicism from their shoulders: may we not recognize in Thomas Purney, though neglected by his own age and unknown to ours, one who, alike as poet and as critic, hung out a slender banner of revolt from an inconspicuous turret of the very citadel of Augustan formalism.

H. O. White.

A CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ENGLISH MEDIEVAL ROMANCES

'NO one can go far in the history of poetry', says Professor Ker, speaking of the seventeenth century, 'without recognizing the power of formal and abstract ideals, especially in the age of the Renaissance. Of the empty patterns that fascinate the minds of poets there were two preeminent: the Heroic Poem and the Classical Tragedy.'[1] The fascination of 'empty patterns' was felt strongly by the English poets of an earlier time—not least by Chaucer, the greatest of them—and this must be the excuse for studying the nature of a poetic form popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—the romance.

In the course of centuries the appeal made by any piece of written matter rarely remains unchanged. What the reader finds in any work must to some extent depend on his own mental and emotional equipment, and this, in its turn, depends partly on the mental and emotional characteristics of his age. It has been noticed that until the middle of the eighteenth century some writers on Chaucer disparage, but more ignore, the quality in him which seems to the modern reader most obvious and excellent—his humour.[2] This particular appeal of his work, though the discovery of it was belated, seems legitimate and in accordance with a true understanding of it. But it is possible for literature belonging to a past age to make an appeal to a later public which is not in accordance with the spirit of the writer, or of his work as it was originally conceived.[3] However the scholar may sympathize with the natural reactions of his contemporaries to any work of art, it is part of his business to

[1] See *The Art of Poetry*, by W. P. Ker, Oxford, 1923, p. 53.

[2] See *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion*, by C. E. F. Spurgeon, Cambridge, 1925, Introduction, pp. cxxxviii–cxxxix.

[3] Perhaps the modern tendency to stress the pathos of Malvolio's or Shylock's situation is an instance.

make clear its significance for the time in which it was created and not to confuse the appeal it makes at the present time with that which it made at first.

The medieval romances seem particularly in danger of being misinterpreted in the manner suggested, possibly partly because the word 'romance' inevitably calls to the mind the general vague term 'romance' or the adjective 'romantic'. But it is obviously unsafe to conclude that the peculiar modern connotations of these words necessarily express the nature of the medieval romance. This study will attempt, among other things, to characterize the romances as they appeared to the writers of them and their contemporary public, and it may be well to begin it by considering the meaning of the word 'romance' in medieval England.

In a passage in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, Pandarus comes to see his niece Criseyde and finds her sitting with two other ladies in a 'paved parlour' while a maiden reads aloud to them. We learn what the book is about. 'This romance is of Thebes, that we rede,' says Criseyde. The use of the word to describe a medieval story of the Siege of Thebes is one that does not strike the modern student as peculiar. A list of English medieval romances compiled at the present day would undoubtedly contain a *Siege of Thebes*, though, for reasons of chronology, it could not be the one that Chaucer's characters read.[1] On the other hand Chaucer uses the word elsewhere of a book to which we would not apply it. In *The Book of the Duchesse*, he tells how, unable to sleep, he chose to 'dryve the night away' by reading a romance and he relates one of the stories he read. From this story it is possible to identify the book as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In both French and English the history of the word 'romance' is a similar one. It originally denoted the vernacular language of France as distinct from the Latin from which it was derived, but it soon extended its meaning to

[1] In *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, by J. E. Wells, two are mentioned in the section headed 'Romances'. Both were written in the fifteenth century.

cover works written in French, so that the medieval English word can often be translated into modern English as 'the French book'. Very gradually there is a further alteration of its meaning and it comes to be used for those tales of knights and their doings for which the French were first famous, without regard to the language in which they were written. But owing to its previous wider connotation, there is always a tendency to use it to mean any kind of fictitious narrative, and even books of other kinds in the French tongue.[1] In speaking of medieval romance, I shall ignore its wider meaning and confine myself to what we still call 'romances of chivalry'. Exactly what is implied by that term will, I hope, become clear in the course of the following characterization.

The *medieval romance* is of course incapable of such exact definition as some literary types, but it is not impossible to describe it so that its nature and limits are comparatively clear. In attempting to do so, I shall necessarily be led to make generalizations to which particular instances may be exceptions. I can only hope to describe the majority of romances.[2]

Medieval *romances* are stories of adventure in which the chief parts are played by knights, famous kings or distressed ladies, acting most often under the impulse of love, religious faith, or, in many, mere desire for adventure. The stories were first told in verse, but when, later, prose versions were made, they were also called *romances*. In length the verse romances may vary from a few hundred lines to tens of thousands (*Guy of Warwick*, Lydgate's *Troy Book*); the prose ones are mostly very long.

The material for the stories could be drawn from any source, from Greek or Latin history or legend (*The Lyfe of Alisaunder*), from tales brought by travellers from the East

[1] After this essay was completed the writer discovered that in Nathaniel E. Griffin's 'The Definition of Romance' (*P. M. L. A.* xxxviii, pp. 50 ff.) a similar account of the development of the word is given.

[2] My remarks will be applicable primarily to the English romances and may or may not be true of the French.

(*Floris and Blauncheflur*), from legends which had collected round the figures of English, French, or British history (*The Lay of Havelok, Sir Ferumbras, Morte Arthure*). The chief thing needed to turn any story into a romance of chivalry was conformance to a certain set of literary and social conventions. Something of the nature of these conventions is revealed by comparing the first mention of Priam's sons in Lydgate's *Troy Book* with the same passage in its source, the Latin *Historia Troiana* written by Guido della Colonne, which, though a medieval compilation, is not a romance. In the latter Hector is described as 'inaudite strenuitatis miles virtute maxima bellicosus cuius gesta virtute multa vigent in longa memoria longum non sine causa recensenda per euum'.[1] Lydgate, who professes to follow Guido 'as nyȝe as euer' he may, has the following version of this:

> . . . also fer as Phebus in compas
> A natural day goth his cercle aboute,
> So fer of hym, with-outen any doute,
> Reported was þe renoun and þe name,
> Þe worþines and þe noble fame.
> For liche as bokis of him specefye,
> He was þe Rote and stok of cheualrie,
> And of knyȝthod verray souereyn flour,
> Þe sowrs and welle of worship and honour;
> And of manhod, I dar it wel expresse
> Example and merour . . .

There are a good many more lines of the description ending with

> In olde auctours rede and ȝe may fynde
> Of his knyȝthood how ȝit þei make mynde.
> (Lydgate's *Troy Book*, Book II, ll. 238–56.)

In the *Life of King Alisaunder*, at the outset of Alexander's career, Philip of Macedon girds him with a sword and tells him to be a good knight. Whatever the original home of the romance hero, he is transformed into a knight and conforms to the medieval ideas of knightly behaviour. The

[1] Quoted from edition of 1486 'in ciuitate Argentina impressa'.

qualities that Chaucer notes in his knight—a pattern of chivalric virtue—are

> Trouthe and honour, fredom and courtesy,

and later he comments on his gentleness,

> And of his port as meke as is a mayde,
> He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
> In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.

Accordingly Lydgate's description of Hector speaks of his being

> Wonder benigne and lawly of his chere,
> Discret also, prudent and vertuous,

and we read of Alexander that, at his death, his knights lamented him for his 'hardynesse, his gentryse and his courtesye'.

One qualification must be made with regard to the statement that all romance heroes conform to medieval ideas of chivalric conduct. In different periods and in the hands of different writers these ideas are naturally not precisely the same. Hence in *King Horn*, for instance, there is a cruder conception of knightly duty than in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. But the common ideas at the basis of all variations are important enough to prevent the statement from being meaningless.[1]

Not only are the heroes medieval in their ideals and behaviour, but the setting which forms their background is medievalized too. The armour, dresses, jewels which romance-writers eagerly describe are those that were fashionable at the time when the descriptions were written.

At the feasts which are frequent in the romances, the favourite medieval dishes are served. The author of *Morte Arthure*, whose story begins with a feast, mentions boars' heads, wild and specially fatted venison, peacocks, plovers, sucking pigs, herons in sauce, swans, 'frumentee' (furmenty), 'tartes of Turky' and many other delicacies, served on gold

[1] The Charlemagne romances probably have least of the spirit of chivalry, being affected by their origin in the *chansons de geste*. See pp. 117–19.

and silver dishes. Often the account of the dishes is followed by a list of well-known wines. We read of

> rumney and malmesyne
> Both ypocrasse and vernage wyne,
> Mount rose and wyne of Greke
> Both Algrade and respice eke,
> Antioche and bastarde
> Pyment, also, and garnade ;
> Wyne of Greke and muscadell,
> Both claré, pyment and Rochell.

(*Squyr of Lowe Degre*, ll. 753 ff. Ed. Ritson, *Ancient Engleish Metrical Romancees*, vol. iii.)

This second quotation is taken from a passage in the *Squyr of Lowe Degre* in which a king, obliged to prevent his daughter from marrying beneath her, attempts to console her by offering her everything in his power. The passage is a long catalogue of all medieval delights. Conspicuous among the amusements he suggests is hunting, and a cursory glance at the romances show that this was as common a form of amusement for the heroes of all romances as it was in reality for the high-born of medieval France and England. Even the king of the Fairies goes hunting (*Sir Orfeo*). In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the poet describes minutely a deer-hunt, a boar-hunt, and a fox-hunt, using a number of technical terms such as *quest*, *querré*, *rechated*, *mute*, and even going into detail over the breaking up of the deer and the 'unlacing' of the boar—accomplishments expected of a gentleman.[1] The author of this poem clearly intended to appeal to the fashionable world by his mention of the very latest fashions in shoes, in ladies' head-dresses, in architecture and other things.[2]

In fact, the romances were partly popular, because, unlike so much of the Latin literature known to medieval readers, they were up to date in their ideas and their properties.

[1] See ll. 1325 ff. and 1606 ff., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon. See also the note in this edition on l. 1325.

[2] See ibid., Introduction, pp. xx, xxi.

This has been recognized by some scholars, notably Professor W. P. Ker and Sir Walter Raleigh.[1] W. P. Ker is, however, writing of the French romances[2] and Sir Walter Raleigh's remarks are introductory to a discussion of romance in later English literature, and neither of them shows in any detail how the English romances illustrate the point.

It is partly by reason of the 'modernity' of their settings that discussion of the general term 'romance' is mostly irrelevant in connexion with them, if romance is, in the words of Professor Ker, 'the name for the sort of imagination that possesses the mystery and the spell of everything remote and unattainable' (*Epic and Romance* (1908), p. 321). Yet several recent critics use somewhat similar definitions to explain a quality they claim to find there. Miss Rickert (*Early English Romances in Verse, Romances of Love*, Introd., pp. xiv ff.) finds that widely different romances 'agree in being as far as possible removed from the facts of daily experience' . . . and concludes: 'Briefly the essential implication seems to me to be that of the soul leaving its customary habitations and wandering in strange places, and essaying to bring into literature the fruits of its adventures.' W. M. Dixon (*English Epic and Heroic Poetry*, pp. 98 ff.) and G. Wyndham (*Springs of Romance in the Literature of Europe*) seem to hold the same view. Professor H. R. Patch, in his discussion of *Chaucer and Mediaeval Romance*,[3] thinks that, though the twelfth-century French romances of Chrétien de Troyes may have been to some extent realistic,

[1] See *Romance. Two Lectures*, by Sir Walter Raleigh (1916), pp. 25 ff. Of the romances, he says, 'The note of this Romance literature is that it was actual, modern, realistic at a time when classical literature had become a remote convention of bookish culture.' Cf. also p. 29. Cf. W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance* (1908), pp. 324 ff.; *English Literature: Medieval*, p. 112; *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. i, p. 280.

[2] Except in the second reference given; but even here he does not work out in any detail the applications of his remark. Sarah F. Barrow's book, *The Medieval Society Romances* (1925), which points out the 'modernity' of romances, also deals chiefly with French romances.

[3] *Essays in Memory of Barrett Wendell*, by his Assistants. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926

'in the fourteenth century it was rather to the imagination which found special glamour in the remote or impossible that these stories offered an appeal'. The aim of his paper is to answer the question 'To what extent does the romantic quality (or the quality of the romances) appear in Chaucer's work?' But in this sentence with its parenthesis he begs a question to which the answer must be sought before his own can be asked; namely, is 'romantic quality' the same thing as 'the quality of the romances'?

It has already been suggested here that such interpretations of the romances have arisen because it is too easily assumed that they have made the same kind of appeal in all ages. It is certainly clear from a recent discussion of the meaning of the word 'romantic'[1] that when it was first used in the seventeenth century to denote that which was 'like the old romances', the qualities that these romances were believed to possess were unreality and remoteness. If this is what the seventeenth-century readers saw in them, for us, separated from all things medieval by the 'dark backward and abysm of time', distance lends mysterious charm to the heroes and heroines of the romances and to their surroundings; but to those who lived when they were written, the settings at least were not, in this sense, romantic.

At the same time, he who looked to them for realistic pictures of medieval manners and properties would be disappointed, except in a few noteworthy instances, among which are *Havelok* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Generally speaking, there is in them nothing of the realism of the *Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*, still less of that of the *Vision of Piers the Plowman*. The pleasure they afforded in their own time has nothing in common with that given by some of the novels of Arnold Bennett in ours; rather they pleased as modern novels of 'high life' do. One of their merits in the eyes of those for whom they were written must have been that they provided an escape from the

[1] Cf. *Words and Idioms*, by Logan Pearsall Smith, 1925. The author had previously made some study of the use of the word 'romantic' in a *S. P. E. Tract* for 1924.

failures or partial successes of life as it was lived by showing them that life idealized.[1] The dresses and armour, the feasts and hunts were cut to the pattern of things known, but on those patterns the romancer embroidered every splendour his imagination could conjure up. In the romances, everything must be of a gorgeousness to which real life could not attain. Hence the length and monotony of some of the descriptions. When a hero of romance gave a feast, he provided all the fine dishes of which the writer had heard; if the heroine's mantle is described, it is covered so thick with embroidery and precious stones that the account of it wearies the mind (*Emaré*). This idealization of ordinary life is found in other than material things. Doubtless, in fact, knights did not always act in accordance with the highest conceptions of chivalric conduct. In the Middle Ages, wife-beating was not unknown, even among the nobler classes of society. But in the romances, the hero is a superman. He does his duty whatever it may cost him (*Lybeaus Desconus*), and should he fail to do it, he only recovers self-respect and the esteem of his fellows after a long-drawn-out period of misery and penance (*Ywain and Gawain*). The romance writers believed in that 'heightening' of the characters and the action once admired by Dryden and exemplified in the *Conquest of Granada* and its hero Almanzor, and with them, as with him, this heightening was accompanied, perhaps inevitably, by simplified character-drawing. The half-tones of ordinary human nature are not for the romance-writers; every man is either a hero and a good man, or a villain. The man who disregards knightly duty has the latter label attached to him from the outset and is, in due time, disgraced or killed.[2] Poetic justice reigns supreme throughout the romances. The great majority of them end happily, with

[1] Just as in Restoration Comedy the wit and immorality reflect the fashion of the time, but there can be little doubt that in the plays the wit was more sparkling and the immorality more outrageous and less frequently attended by unpleasant consequences than in real life.

[2] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is an obvious exception; but it is not in all ways a typical romance, being a work of art in a greater degree than most romances.

a wedding or perhaps a reunion or a reconciliation. It is typical of them, that in *Sir Orfeo*, the conclusion of the classical story of Orpheus is changed; the hero wins back his wife and 'they lyved gode lyfe afterwarde'. At the end of a romance innocence is always vindicated and triumphant, however violent may have been the trials by which it was beset (*Athelston, Chevalere Assigne, Emaré, Havelok*). The true Christian gets the better of all villains, slanderers, magicians, and Saracens (*King Horn, Roland and Vernagu, Lybeaus Desconus, Guy of Warwick*). The few exceptions are due to the occasional intractability of historic or legendary material (*Lyfe of Alisaunder, Morte Arthure, Knight of Courtesy*), or to the fact that the French original, not a romance proper, is too well known to be tampered with (*Song of Roland*).[1] On the whole the ordinary limitations of human life do not exist. At the end of *Amis and Amiloun*, a story of the complete devotion of two friends, Amiloun is brought to Amis suffering from leprosy. It is revealed to both the friends in dreams that a cure could be wrought if Amiloun were bathed in the blood of Amis's two children. Thereupon Amis cuts the children's throats and effects the cure. Soon he is forced to break the news of his deed to his wife, but when they both go to look at the children's bodies, they find them alive and quite sound.

Miracles as wonderful as this are of constant occurrence in the romances, and though, to some extent, they can be regarded as further examples of the idealization of ordinary life, they are also connected with another feature of the romances which is not to be explained so simply—the use of the marvellous in all its aspects. It is perhaps employed most constantly by the writers of Arthurian romances, but it is obvious that it is not confined either to them or to the romances as a whole. Dragons, giants, monsters of all kinds, hauntings, shape-changings and sorcery are to be found in all medieval tales; *Beowulf* and the Old Norse sagas use

[1] Actually the surviving English version of this is a fragment, but its likeness to the course of the French *Chanson de Roland* is too great for us to suppose its end would have differed from that of the *Chanson*.

them as much as the romances. But the romance-writers probably exploit the marvellous more untiringly than any other medieval writers, and, to those wonders used also by the Old English and Old Norse writers, they add new ones less terrifying, and, when well treated, more subtle—stories of fairyland (*Sir Orfeo, Sir Launfal*), of magic castles and enchanted ladies (*The Weddynge of Sir Gawen*), and the mystical wonders of the Holy Grail.

At this point it is necessary to reconsider the statement that the romances are not 'romantic'. Do not these marvels contain the essence of 'romance' in the meaning in which Professor Ker used the word? The answer to this question is not a simple one. Undoubtedly in a sense they do; they are so remote from human life in any period or country that they would seem to be necessarily invested with the charm of mystery. Whatever has been said of the unromantic nature of the details and background of the romances, it must be admitted that many of the *stories* told in them are to the modern mind essentially romantic stories, many of the adventures through which the heroes pass are romantic. But it appears that remoteness from real life is not enough. If an incident is to be 'romantic' in this sense in literature, the writer who uses it must regard it in a particular way. It would perhaps be difficult for a modern possessing any imagination to write of the marvels described in the romances in other than a 'romantic' manner. But, because he did not make as definite a dividing line between the possible and the impossible as most of us do, the medieval romance-writer in France and England looked upon his marvels with so unmoved and matter-of-fact an air that the glamour and mystery which should surround them is, in the majority of romances, completely lacking. We are told in the *King of Tars*, that on being baptized the Saracen Sultan changed his colour from black to white, but this startling change seems quite dull because of the manner of its telling:

> The Preste hihte sire Cleophas
> And nempnede so the soudan of Damas,
> After his own name.

His colour that lodlich and blak was
Hit bi com feir thorw godes gras
And cler withoute blame.
(*The King of Tars*, ll. 851–6. Ed. Ritson, vol. ii.)

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner shows us that there must be a preparation for a mystery; the right setting must be created, the imagination of the reader must be stimulated in the right way; and this is not done in the romances, with a very few exceptions. It is one of their failures at which Chaucer mocks in *Sir Thopas* when he makes his hero suddenly, for no particular reason, announce his determination to have a fairy mistress:

O seinte Marie, benedicite!
What eyleth this love at me
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-quene shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.

An elf-quene wol I love, y-wis,
For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make
In toune;
All othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-quene I me take
By dale and eek by doune!
(*Canterbury Tales*, B. ll. 1974 ff.)

Elsewhere Chaucer shows that he knew how a fairy should be introduced:

And in his way it happed him to ryde,
In all this care, under a forest-syde,
Whereas he saugh upon a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo;
Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,
In hope that som wisdom sholde he lerne.
But certainly, er he came fully there,
Vanisshed was this daunce, he niste where.

No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
Save on the grene he saugh sitting a wyf . . .[1]
(*Canterbury Tales*, D. 989 ff.)

The very lavishness of the display of marvels in the romances breeds contempt in the reader. Who could be moved by three giants, two magicians, one sorceress, a magic hall and an enchanted lady all in the course of one fairly short story (*Lybeaus Desconus*)? The baldness of treatment of the marvellous and the abundant supply of it destroy the sense of remoteness and once again 'romance' is not to be found. It is impossible to say with absolute certainty that this use of the marvellous never gave medieval readers the thrill of the remote and mysterious, but so infrequently do we find any obvious attempt to exploit the sensations of surprise and horror that might be expected to arise from them,[2] that it seems likely that this was not what they sought in the romances. What is certain is that medieval readers and hearers thirsted for tales of all kinds, enjoyed the mere narration of a series of events. Only by this supposition can we explain the duplication of incident in the romances such as is found when, in *King Horn*, the hero twice returns in disguise at a crucial moment. The length of romances like *Guy of Warwick* is due to the same cause. In order to satisfy this thirst it was natural for the romance-writer to ransack all possible sources for stories, and this by itself accounts in part for the use of the marvellous. A crude romance like *Sir Perceval of Galles* in which marvellous incidents abound is clearly meant primarily to appease the demand for stories. Though references to rich feasts, castles, and other medieval properties are to be found, there are none of the fashionable details which have been noticed

[1] I am glad to find myself so far in agreement with Professor Patch that we have both, independently, chosen this passage for the same purpose. See p. 108 of his essay.

[2] As, for instance, in the horror-novel of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These by themselves, apart from any other evidence, bear witness to a taste for the 'romantic' in the contemporary public.

in other romances, and it is possible that it was written for a popular rather than a fashionable audience. *Lybeaus Desconus* shows the same heaping together of adventures, this time by so undiscriminating a hand that the story has little coherence. Unlike *Sir Perceval*, it contains much descriptive detail, but it is used without any art. The writer is copying fashionable romances without possessing the training and culture necessary to appreciate the best that could be done with such material. It is significant that this 'marvellous' story is one of those at which Chaucer mocks.

To sum up what has been said of the unromantic nature of the majority of these poems: It would seem that some critics of the romances have not made a necessary distinction between the 'properties' used by romance-writers and the actual treatment of them in the romances themselves. These 'properties' may be considered in two groups—the details of setting, and the marvellous happenings. Both of these, if they are considered apart from any particular treatment of them, spell 'romance' to the modern; to the medieval reader the first did not, and the second may or may not have done so. But when we come to look at the treatment of these 'properties' in the romances themselves we find that it is 'romantic' in the sense that some modern poetry [1] is romantic in a few only, and those the greatest of them.

Two such widely different poems as *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* will serve as examples of romances in which something of the glamour of 'romance', as the modern understands it, is to be found. In the first the other-world of fairyland is as truly created in the lines:

> He miȝt se him bisides
> Oft in hot undertides
> Þe king o fairy wiþ his rout
> Com to hunt him al about,
> Wiþ dim cri and bloweing;
> And houndes also wiþ him berking;

[1] For instance, *The Ancient Mariner* and some of Keats's poetry.

> Ac no best þai no nome,
> No neuer he nist whider þai bicome![1]
>
> (ll. 281 ff.)

as in Prospero's speech to those who

> . . . on the sands with printless foot
> Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him
> When he comes back . . .

In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the 'romance' is of a robuster, and at the same time subtler, kind. The poet throws the 'modifying colours of imagination' over the familiar so that it lives with a new life. Wintry weather in the mountainous country where Sir Gawain finds the Green Chapel, a castle with its battlements standing clearly outlined against the sky as though 'pared out of papure', the pleasure of a glowing fire and fresh clothes after a journey—these must have been familiar things to him, but he transforms what is familiar and topical into the unique and permanent. At times, too, he displays the other power used by Coleridge with such skill in the *Ancient Mariner*. The Green Knight himself is of the other world, but he can mingle with men without arousing incredulity because of the 'dramatic truth' of his behaviour when, for instance,

> Wyth sturne schere þer he stod he stroked his berde,
> And wyth countenance dry3e he dro3 doun his cote.
>
> (ll. 334–5.)

But if these two poems are exceptions to the general statement that the romances are not 'romantic', it is by virtue of one quality alone—the imagination of their writers. Everything in the stories might be found in other romances that lack the quality of 'romance'. Comparison of these poems with other romances reveals the fact that 'romance' is not inherent in any kind of subject-matter, nor is it found by nature in any literary form; it is the gift of the artist,

[1] Quoted from the edition of the poem in *Fourteenth-Century Verse and Prose*, ed. by K. Sisam. It is probably true to say that this kind of 'romance' is more often found in the 'Breton lais' than in the other romances.

the result of a peculiar and individual way of seeing things. The majority of English romance-writers are not imaginative enough to possess it.

Up to this point it is the contents and the spirit of the romances that have been considered, and any student of medieval literature will know that a good deal of what has been said of these characteristics is true of other forms of vernacular literature at the time. The expression of the unknown in terms of the familiar and the medieval is a feature of all story-telling in the period, whether it be in narrative or dramatic form. In the poem known as *Cleanness*, Nebuzaradan, captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard (2 Kings xxv. 8), is a 'gentyle duc' and the 'chef of his cheualrye', and in the *Second Shepherds' Play*, belonging to the *Towneley Cycle*, the shepherds at Nazareth grumble at weather that is unmistakably English and bring as offerings to the child Christ a 'bob of cherys' and a ball with which to 'go to the tenys'. The matter-of-fact attitude towards the marvellous is perhaps even more striking in the legends of the saints than in the romances, and so is the idealization of ordinary life, though, on the whole, sides of life different from those found in the romances are treated. Nor is the type of story used a distinguishing sign of the romance. Several instances exist of the treatment of the same story in a romance and in another literary form. It is therefore clearly necessary to mark out more definitely the boundaries of the romance species, particularly in regard to literary treatment and form. It is, of course, only possible to do this on broad lines.

I propose to begin with those distinctions which are easiest to make. The similarity between the saint's legend and the romance has already been indicated,[1] but the differences between the two are really obvious enough. The legend is written with didactic intent, the romance chiefly to give pleasure; even when a didactic element enters into the romance, the other object is predominant. On the whole,

[1] Cf. Saintsbury, *History of the French Novel*, vol. i, p. 9, where the view that the saints' lives gave birth to the romances is put forward.

therefore, the two forms make use of different stories, though some motives are found in both.[1] Very rarely in the saints' lives is there that attention paid to descriptive detail which is such a feature of the romance. *Sir Isumbras,* which tells a story very near in many ways to the legend of St. Eustace, has descriptions of the great stature of the knight; of his wrapping his wife and children in his 'mantille of palle' and his 'riche surcoat'; of the fine ships of the Sultan 'with toppe-castelles set one lofte . . .' which are entirely lacking in the Eustace legend in the *South-English Legendary.* It is characteristic, too, that in *Sir Isumbras* the reunion is followed by a long and happy life:

> Thay lyffede and dyed with gud content,
> And sythen alle till hevene thay went,
> When that they dede ware.

(*Sir Isumbras,* ll. 789–91. Ed. Halliwell, *Thornton Romances.*)

whereas in the legend of Eustace the reunion is followed by a further trial of faith and eventually by martyrdom for the whole family.

Another distinction to be made is that between the romance and the ballad. If one considers a typical ballad and a typical romance, the distinction between the two seems so obvious as to be hardly worth making, but the apparent ease with which it can be made is a little misleading. A more careful examination of the two forms reveals that there are ballads using the same kind of story as is commonly found in a romance. An example is *Sir Aldingar* from the *Percy Folio Manuscript* (vol. i, pp. 166 ff.). At other times we find the same story appearing in a ballad form and in a Breton *lai* or romance. The *lai, Sir Orfeo,* has a counterpart in *King Orfeo,* a ballad preserved till the nineteenth century in

[1] The romances which use the theme of Chaucer's story of Constance (see Wells's *Manual,* pp. 112 ff.) share several of their incidents with the legends. For instance, the separation of members of a family through divers accidents and their subsequent reunion is found in most of them as well as in the legend of St. Eustace or of St. Clement in the *South-English Legendary.* Several of them have stories of the persecution of an innocent woman similar to those of some Christian martyrs.

the Shetlands;[1] *Hind Horn* is a ballad on the same subject as *King Horn* and *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*; and the same story is at the back of the ballad *Fair Annie* and the Breton *lai*, *Lai le Freine*. It is, however, precisely these ballads that approach closest to the romances and *lais* that give away most completely the secret of the difference between the forms.[2] In *Lai le Freine* the events of the story are told in the following sequence: Two knights, who are great friends, live in the west country. The wife of one of them gives birth to twin sons. Thereupon the wife of the other, an envious and spiteful woman, declares that to bear twins is a sign of infidelity. Soon after she herself bears twin girls and, afraid that what she has said will recoil on her own head, she plots to get rid of one of the children. A maid takes the child away, and, after wandering over a wild heath throughout the night, at dawn hides her in an ash-tree near a 'hous of religion', and makes off. There the child is found by the porter and taken to the abbess. She is called Frain (= ash-tree) after her hiding-place, and is brought up by the abbess till she is twelve years old. Then a young knight persuades her to run away with him and be his mistress. So she lives until his knights urge him to forsake her for 'sum lordes douhter'. The lady he decides to marry is the twin sister of Le Frain and he brings her as a bride to his house. . . . Here the English version, which is a fragment, ends, but the conclusion of the tale can be supplied from the original version, the French *lai* of Marie de France. Le Frain sets herself to help and serve all she can and her behaviour wins the love of the lady's mother, who is Le Frain's own mother too. Thinking the bridal bed is not fair enough, Le Frain spreads over it the rich mantle

[1] The version in Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. i, pp. 217 ff., was taken down in the nineteenth century from the lips of an old man in Unst, Shetland.

[2] On p. 120, the difference between some of the 'Breton lais', of which *Lai le Freine* is an example, and romances proper is discussed. But both 'Breton lais' and romances have in common the points of difference from the ballads which are under consideration and it is therefore legitimate, as it is convenient, to take a 'lai' as illustration here.

in which she had been wrapped as a baby when she was carried away by the maid, and which has never left her. The mother of course recognizes it and the whole story comes out. The marriage is annulled and Le Frain weds her lover. After a time the sister is married to another knight.

The ballad *Fair Annie* begins thus:

It's narrow, narrow make your bed
And learn to lie your lane;
For I'm ga'n o'er the sea, Fair Annie,
A braw bride to bring hame.
Wi her I will get gowd and gear;
Wi you I neer got nane.

(*English and Scottish Popular Ballads,* vol. ii, p. 69, Version A.)

At once a most important difference between the two versions leaps to the eye. The ballad deals with a story, but its method is quite different from that of a narrative poem; it does not tell the story, but alludes to it as to something that is already known. The explanations, motivations of actions, and other things that make the links in a connected narrative are omitted. Only the salient points in the story appear at all and they are not presented with the detachment of a narrator but coloured by the passion aroused in an actor in the story.[1] This is how the arrival of the bride is told in the ballad:

'Come up, come up, my eldest son,
And look o'er yon sea-strand,
And see your father's new-come bride,
Before she comes to land.'

'Come down, come down, my mother dear,
Come frae the castle wa.
I fear, if langer ye stand there,
Ye'll let yoursell down fa.'

The last quotation shows another feature that differentiates the two, the distinctive ballad manner, which partly consists in the repetition of the same phrase or similar phrases. In

[1] Of course these remarks are not so applicable to all ballads as to *Fair Annie*. *Sir Aldingar*, for instance, comes much nearer to being a simple narrative poem than this.

the ballad *Hind Horn*, Horn is recognized by his lover by means of a ring which she gave him long ago, and she asks:

'O got ye this by sea or land?
Or got ye it off a dead man's hand?'

'I got it not by sea, I got it by land,
And I got it, madam, out of your own hand.'

'O I'll cast off my gowns of brown
And beg wi you frae town to town.'

'O I'll cast off my gowns of red,
And I'll beg wi you to win my bread.'

'Ye needna cast off your gowns of brown,
For I'll make you lady o many a town.'

'Ye needna cast off your gowns of red,
It's only a sham, the begging o my bread.'

(*English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. i, p. 202, Version A.)

There are no mannerisms of this kind in *King Horn*, or *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*. Comparatively, they are straightforward narrative.

It is unnecessary to give here a complete account of the ballad manner. What is abundantly clear is that, though there may be no difference between the story used by the writer of a *lai* or romance and of a ballad, there is a great difference in treatment.

It is more difficult to draw the distinction between the French epics (the *chansons de geste*) and the romances. Historically the two forms of narrative poetry influenced one another. Those epics which survive in late forms show sometimes a complete remodelling in order to make them more like the stories of adventure popular in the romances; the *Quatre Fils d'Aymon* is an example. Sometimes, as in *Huon de Bordeaux*, to the epic story is added a 'romantic' ending. But the distinction between the two forms is clear enough when the earliest extant *chanson de geste* is considered side by side with a typical romance. The differences in conception and treatment have been more fully discussed by Professor Ker in *Epic and Romance* than is possible or

necessary here. The earliest *chansons de geste* are heroic poems, real epics; that is, as Professor Ker indicates, they have a dramatic variety which the romances have not. The characters speak for themselves, whereas in the romances, we are always conscious of the story-teller and his manipulation of episode and character. In the *chansons de geste,* as in other national epics, man is chiefly concerned with one activity—that of fighting—and in *Roland,* the greatest of them, the poet's theme is 'essentially the old story of the heroic age—no knight-errantry, but the resistance of a man driven in a corner'. The romance, as we have seen, has no concern with tragedy and the romancer is interested in other activities than fighting, particularly in activities resulting from the passion of love. Instead of the heroic sentiments and actions of the tragic hero, there is the sensibility of the lover and the well-regulated behaviour of the follower of the ideals of chivalry.

The earliest of these French epics are further distinguished from French romances by being written in a metrical form of their own—in those groups of decasyllabic lines, linked together by assonance, to which the French have given the name 'laisses'.

These differences between the forms are chiefly of use to students of French literature. English romance-writers sometimes took French epics for their sources[1] and dealt with them as far as possible as they did with other narrative material. There is never, it is true, the same sophistication as in the Arthurian romances. Descriptions are fewer and shorter and not concerned much with fashionable contemporary life. The stories are mainly about fighting, and ladies and love-making mostly play a small part; *Duke Rowlande and Sir Ottuell of Spayne* is a fair example. When ladies do appear, they have not the good manners that one expects of a romance heroine. Floripas, in *Sir Ferumbras,* takes the law into her own hands and kills Oliver's

[1] For instance, *The Sowdone of Babylone* and *Sir Ferumbras* go back to French versions of the Fierabras story, *Otuel* to a version of the Otinel story.

jailer by hitting him over the head in order that she may see Oliver.[1] In these ways the English Charlemagne romances bear the traces of their origin; but apart from these things there is no difference between these romances and others. The 'dramatic variety' of the original epics is gone. The power to convey lofty sentiments and a tragic atmosphere—to create an epic hero, in fact—is gone too; the bare events are left without the heroic spirit which originally informed them. The English fragmentary *Song of Roland* is so poor a poem that it is hardly a fair illustration, but it does show how an epic can be turned into a narrative poem that is not an epic, even when the main course of events remains unchanged. One has only to compare ll. 511–54 of the English poem (E. E. T. S. edition) with ll. 1017–81 of the *Chanson* (ed. Bédier) to see how the vigour and strength, the intense and dramatic expectation, the grandeur of Roland and Oliver and of their situation—all that makes the epic quality of the *Chanson*—have gone out of the story. The English poet has not even the sense to keep the stirring repetition, 'Cumpainz Rollanz, l'olifan car sunez'—'Cumpainz Rollanz, sunez vostre olifan'.

It is owing to this use and transformation of the French epics in English that the distinction in form between *chanson de geste* and *romance* has no relevance for English criticism. The distinction which needs to be made in considering English romances is rather between the *romance* and epic poetry in general than between the former and the particular branch of epic represented by the *chanson de geste*. Generally speaking, the English romance form differs from the epic form in the same ways as the French romances differ from the *chanson de geste*,[2] but detailed study of individual

[1] The English Charlemagne romances, many of which are late, give the impression that they were written for a popular, not a fashionable, audience, or by writers who were driven to this somewhat uncongenial material by the insatiable demand for romances.

[2] Nathaniel E. Griffin in *The Definition of Romance* argues that the essential difference between the romance and the epic is that the former is an incredible tale, while the latter, at least for those for whom it is written, is credible. The epic presupposes a 'perfect accord between the

romances would show that the degree to which they differ varies greatly. One romance, the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, on a theme which roused more patriotic enthusiasm in an English poet than the doings of Charlemagne and his peers ever could, comes very near to claiming a place among heroic poems in English.

The last distinction to be made is that between the *romance* and what is usually called nowadays a *tale*. It is far the hardest to draw and is one that some critics would not admit except in certain obvious instances. The romance is distinct enough in subject-matter from the kind of medieval tale known as a *fabliau*, a tale, such as those which Chaucer puts into the mouths of the Miller and the Reeve, which deals essentially with middle-class or lower-class life and is full of broad fun. But in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* there are a number of tales, linked together by a thin thread of narrative, many of which are on the same subjects as the romances. The Tale of Constance (Book II, ll. 587 ff.), besides being the same as Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*, has episodes in common with a number of romances, among which are *Emaré*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, and *Sir Torrent of Portyngale*. The Tale of Jason and Medea (Book V, ll. 3247 ff.) has some of the characteristics that we have noted in the romances. Jason is a duke and Medea a witch who gathers herbs and mutters spells. (Cf. Ker, *Epic and Romance*, p. 334.) Is there any essential difference in form between one of the tales in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and a short romance? I think there is, but that the difference is obscured by the existence of the *Breton lais*, some of which (notably some of those of Marie de France, the earliest known) are really *tales*[1] but are usually and naturally classified as romances because of the close connexion of their

poet and his hearer'; the romance is a story which needs interpretation on the part of the story-teller to be significant to the hearer. It must be interpreted in the light of ideas with which both poet and hearer are familiar.

[1] Some are really romances, I think, e. g. *Emaré*, Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*.

subject-matter with that of the romances. It must be admitted however that it is impossible to lay down detailed rules for differentiating the two. Following a suggestion of Ten Brink (*Early English Literature*, 1887, pp. 253 ff.), the distinction I would make is that in the *tale* the chief concern is with the story and 'with the characters of its heroes only so far as this is revealed in the plot'. The *tale* is pure narrative art, at its simplest and barest, stripped of all else. Nowadays it is not often that pure narrative holds the attention of a reader. His interest is rather in some accessory —character drawing, description, or even a lesson or a moral. But children can always be held by this art and this probably explains the perennial popularity of *Robinson Crusoe*. In this matter the medieval reader was like a child and the *tale* fed his desire for pure narrative. As a result of its limitations, in the medieval *tale* the plot is closely knit and clear in outline, and the whole has a simplicity and brevity that in the hands of the best writers gives it a real charm. This is the characteristic of the best of Gower's tales, and of the *Breton lais* of Marie de France. In the romance, the plot may be elaborate and complicated, is often rambling and often interrupted by long descriptive passages or accounts of the hero's feelings (particularly in the French romances of Chrétien de Troyes). 'The unity rests in the person of the hero . . . in the combination of motives, in the idea.'[1] Compared with the *tale*, the romance can be clumsy, vague, and discursive, but at its best there is a breadth of view about it. Whereas the teller of a *tale* goes straight forward, looking neither to right nor left, the romance-writer 'dwells on the circumstantial'.[1] Hence, in the worst of them, wearisome catalogues of irrelevant details; in the best, a gorgeous and thrilling setting for action. The romance offers a more difficult and dangerous road to success than the *tale*.

DOROTHY EVERETT.

[1] See Ten Brink.

THE REPUTATION OF ROBERT BROWNING

THERE is a tide in the affairs of men, and particularly in the reputations of men of letters. That excellent critic Mr. Desmond MacCarthy once expressed a wish that one could buy shares in authors, living or dead, as one can in Rio Tintos or Canadian Pacifics—not of course for dividends but 'for appreciation', though I do not think he put it that way. The shrewd man who had 'bought Brownings' any time in the first half of the reign of Queen Victoria and held them till the end of the century could then have realized a very pretty fortune. On the other hand, the man who bought what our first man sold, and held it through the Great War down to the present time, would have made a bad bargain. He should have sold out not later than 1910. To-day one could only advise him to 'hold on' and hope for the best.

It has been said that the first generation stones its prophets and the next generation builds their sepulchres. That may have been true of the stubborn and tenacious Hebrews, but we moderns are more like St. Paul's Athenians. In these days the preliminary lapidation is generally a harmless and perfunctory affair, and the honorific sepulchres are erected in good time—cenotaphs one might call them—while their prospective occupants can still enjoy these symbols of their brief and delusive immortality. The stoning comes afterwards, and is sometimes directed against the sepulchre as much as against its occupant. Some of the shots that have hit Browning were apparently aimed at the Browning Society.

The subject of this paper is a poet's reputation, and reputation, as Iago remarked, is an elusive entity. The *reputation* of any person at any given moment is the sum total, measured in quantity and quality, of all the opinions about him held by all living persons who have any opinion about him at all. It follows that any estimate of any reputation can be little more than a guess. Moreover, the guesser has to be on his

guard against the apparent evidence, for it is always misleading. We said 'all the opinions held about him', but of these opinions some, a small minority, are written and published, and it would be the greatest mistake to suppose that a man's real reputation is to be found only in what is said about him in print. Professional critics have their own axes to grind. They too must live, and make their own reputations, which they will certainly not do if they go on repeating themselves and each other indefinitely. If the truth on a given subject has already been stated, a little falsehood becomes absolutely necessary if monotony is to be avoided. The public stomach turns if it is to be expected to swallow the same thing again and again—and again. Aristeides was no doubt Just, but it would have been well for him if he had not been called Just so often. Sometimes, of course, one has reason to marvel at the public appetite for repetitions,—the cases of Shakespeare and Abraham Lincoln naturally suggest themselves. But even here there is a variety within the monotony. Praise of Shakespeare has shifted its ground since the days of Lamb: it has even shifted markedly since the days of A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*. And one observes that biographers of Lincoln are transferring their attention from the President to the backwoodsman. It may be that, when this field is thoroughly tilled, Lincoln will have for a time to join Washington among the Grand Old Fogies, in the estimate of fashionable writers.

But the inarticulate public which does not live by writing is only partially affected by these changes of fashion. One notices, for example, that in the last ten years the neglect or depreciation of Browning by literary persons has been coincident with a vigorous adulation of Donne. Yet it may be doubted if the real reputations of Browning and of Donne have moved anything like as much as their apparent reputations. It may be surmised that most of those who have been urged to read Donne have been content with the excerpts supplied in the adulatory articles, and that most of those who have gone further have found him remote, perverse, and

unsatisfying. As for appreciation of Browning, it has no doubt declined since the first decade of the century, as it was bound to do, and will continue for a time to decline further, but the curve has been nothing like so steep as the published evidence would suggest.

It is clear then that a study of a reputation, to be of much value, would have to be exceedingly exhaustive. My own study is not at all exhaustive. All that I would claim for it is that it brings together a certain number of facts and quotations which may interest either those who are interested in Browning, or those who are interested in the ways of our Victorian ancestors.

Browning published *Pauline* anonymously in 1833 and *Paracelsus* under his own name in 1835. From these dates onward he published volumes of verse at brief and fairly regular intervals until his death in 1889. The result of more than half a century of quiet poetical industry is a volume of poetry exceeding in bulk, it is said, that of any other of our greater poets. *Paracelsus* is a poem of about 4,000 lines of a type notoriously non-popular; it is a nominally 'dramatic' yet essentially undramatic poem, an immense versified discussion. Yet its merits were not unrecognized. The *Examiner* had a review of three columns beginning: 'Since the publication of *Philip van Artevelde* we have met with no such evidences of poetical genius.' It is true that the said *Philip van Artevelde* had been published in the previous year; however, the review was enthusiastically laudatory. Then followed *Sordello*, a monologue surpassing *Paracelsus* in length and far surpassing it in obscurity. Tennyson said there were only two lines in it he could understand, the first and the last, and that neither of these was true. They were

> Who will may hear Sordello's story told;

and

> Who would has heard Sordello's story told.

Long afterwards Mr. Chesterton said that *Sordello* was the most glorious compliment that has ever been paid to the average man, i. e. the assumption that he could understand it.

Compliments of this kind, however, are not appreciated, and *Sordello* nipped in the bud whatever popularity was blossoming from *Paracelsus*. The next twenty years saw the publication of most of what was eventually to become the popular Browning of the earnest general public, but at the time they were, according to Mrs. Orr, his friend and his first biographer, twenty years of 'general neglect'.

Yet he retained and steadily extended a circle of admirers among the 'fit, though few'. Ruskin, in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, described him as 'unerring in every sentence he writes about the Middle Ages, always vital, right, and profound. . . . I know of no other piece of modern English, prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit'—the reference is to *The Bishop orders his Tomb*. Landor spoke of him as 'a great poet, a very great poet indeed, as the world will have to agree with us in thinking', and, in verse,

> Since Chaucer was alive and hale
> No man hath walked along our road with step
> So active, so enquiring eye, and tongue
> So varied in discourse.

The second Earl of Lytton, afterwards Disraeli's Viceroy of India, and a poet under the pseudonym of Owen Meredith, also praised Browning in verse as one

> Than whom a mightier master never
> Touched the deep chords of hidden things;
> Nor error did from truth dissever
> With keener glance; nor made endeavour
> To rise on bolder wings
> In those high regions of the soul
> Where thought itself grows dim with awe.

These two verse-quotations, both dating from before 1860, together suggest the points on which the wide popularity of Browning was afterwards to rest—his robust humanity, his keen eye for the picturesque and the curious, his metrical and linguistic versatility, his powerful handling of religious emotion. Yet in general estimation he still ranked not only far below Tennyson but also below his own wife; and it may

be added that to the day of his death Browning himself entirely agreed with the verdict which put both Tennyson and Mrs. Browning above him.

The Ring and the Book was published in 1868–9, and the *Athenæum* wrote, 'We must record at once our conviction, not merely that *The Ring and the Book* is beyond all parallel the supremest poetical achievement of our time, but that it is the most precious and profound spiritual treasure that England has produced since the days of Shakespeare.' When a reviewer drags in Shakespeare things are obviously getting serious. But it was not only the reviewers who capitulated. After *The Ring and the Book* Browning suddenly penetrated to the great heart of the people—British and American. How else can one explain the singular fact that some time in the early 'seventies the Chicago Railway Company 'began to publish his works, part by part, as an appendix to their periodical time-tables, of which 10,000 copies circulated monthly'? If *Sordello* was the most glorious compliment ever paid by a poet to the public, this was, one presumes, the most glorious compliment ever paid by a railway company to a poet; and the second compliment was as little appreciated as the first, for the poem was stolen, and Browning, like a sensible man, objected as strongly as Dr. Johnson[1] had done, to giving his wares away for nothing.

Then there was Mr. Levi Thaxter of Newtonville, Massachusetts, who 'reads you aloud (and his reading is a fine art) to crowds of astonished people, he swears by you, he thinks no one save Shakespeare has a right to be mentioned in the same century with you'. When Mr. Thaxter died in 1885, Browning wrote, by request, a seven-line epitaph for his tomb, a characteristic specimen of the more irritating kind of Browning versification; obscure also, but as *Sordello* had been 'an open book' to Mr. Thaxter, that presumably did not matter.

In 1881 the Browning Society was founded by Dr. Furnivall and Miss Hickey. It is probably best known to the

[1] 'Would you not, sir (turning to Mr. Thrale), rather give away money than porter?'—*Piozzi.*

present generation from Max Beerbohm's picture of Robert Browning taking tea with it. The portraits of the members are obviously idealized, but it correctly intimates Browning's own attitude to the Society, which was, like all his conduct, entirely genial and entirely sensible. Needless to say, he had nothing to do with the institution of the Society, and his share in its proceedings was as slight as it was kindly, but, as he wrote to an eminent member in the last year of his life: 'I cannot but be very grateful for the institution of the Society; for to what else but the eight years' persistent calling attention to my works can one attribute the present demand for them?' Another kind of poet might have thought that the merit of the works themselves had something to do with it.

The papers of the Browning Society were issued to members in pamphlet form, and also published in paper-bound, but singularly expensive, volumes. Among the most eminent contributors one finds Professor (afterwards Bishop) Westcott, who once, I have been told, mentioned Browning with St. John and Origen as the three men to whom he was intellectually most deeply indebted; J. T. Nettleship, Dorothea Beale, J. B. Bury, Walter Raleigh, Arthur Symons, J. Cotter Morison, W. Holman Hunt, Canon Farrar.

In 1886 Mr Arthur Symons, who was to establish a high reputation as an interpreter in fields of literature remote from Browning, published his *Introduction to Browning*, which may be taken as typical of the attitude to Browning which was becoming orthodox among the wide public by 1880 and remained so through the first decade at least of the twentieth century.

> In richness of nature, in scope and penetration of mind and vision, in all the potentialities of poetry he is probably second among English poets to Shakespeare alone. In art, in the power or the patience of working his native ore, he is surpassed by many; but few have ever held so rich a mine in fee. . . . If the best poetry is that which reproduces the most of life, his place is among the great poets of the world. In the vast extent of his work he has dealt with or touched on nearly every phase

and feature of humanity, and his scope is bounded only by the soul's limits, and the last reaches of life. . . . In one very important matter, that of rhyme, he is the greatest master in our language. . . . His lyrical poems contain more structural varieties of form than those of any preceding poet. . . . I do not hesitate to put his portraits of women quite on a level with his portraits of men, and far beyond those of any other English poet of the last three centuries. . . . As a humorist in poetry Mr. Browning takes rank with the greatest. It is of remarkably wide capacity, and ranges from the effervescence of pure fun and freak to that salt and briny laughter whose taste is bitterer than tears. . . . Of all poets Mr. Browning is the healthiest and manliest. The most subtle of minds, his is the least sickly. The wind that blows in his pages is no hot and languorous breeze, laden with scents and sweets, but a fresh salt wind blowing from the sea. His poetry is a tonic: it braces and invigorates. . . . Mr. Browning's Christianity is wider than our creeds, and is all the more vitally Christian in that it never sinks into pietism.

Only one note of criticism is apparent in this panegyric. 'In art he is surpassed by many.' But the thorough-going Browningite would not allow that. Art, it was said, was of more than one kind, and Browning's art was not Classical, as all poetry hitherto had been, but Gothic. With Browning

poetry emancipated itself as architecture had done long before, and broke into the 'labyrinthine lawlessness of a Gothic Cathedral'. Now, no one accuses a Gothic gargoyle of irrelevance; and when once Browning's method has ceased to surprise, no one will object to the corresponding excrescence in poetry. On the contrary, it will be welcomed, for it is more life-like. The universe, so far as we understand it, is not a symmetrical orderly thing at all; and it cannot be finally expressed in the Greek categories. For every work of art is nothing more or less than a complex predicate—the predicate whose subject and copula are the two words 'Life is'; only so has it any meaning. And the Gothic method supplies a truer predicate than the Greek, just because it can harmonise incongruity without abolishing it.[1]

[1] From an Oxford essay privately printed in 1904. Its author is now a very eminent man.

Once Browning had reached the public that was ready for him his appeal to it was as various as the excellences enumerated by Mr. Symons. But it was probably the religious element in his poetry that counted for most in his sales, for the religious public has always been a buying public. There was a time when a certain kind of clergyman could hardly get out of the pulpit until he had quoted something from *An Epistle, Saul, Easter Day, A Death in the Desert,* or *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* In 1891 Professor Henry Jones published an excellent though rather long-winded book entitled *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, and somewhere about 1908 (my copy is undated) Messrs. Nelson ventured to put the book into their admirable blue shilling series, a series one could always find on the bigger railway bookstalls during the Edwardian enlightenment. One would like to know how it sold. In 1900 the authorities at Cambridge set *Robert Browning as a Religious Teacher* as the subject for the Burney Essay Prize; it was won by A. C. Pigou.

One of the most fortunate events for the prolongation of the boom in Browning was the revival of the *English Men of Letters* series in 1903. Most of the later Victorian giants were to be included in the series, and many of them were allotted to the sturdy old professionals of criticism—George Eliot, for example, to Leslie Stephen, and Ruskin to Frederic Harrison. Browning was entrusted to a young writer of whom hardly any one had heard at the time. It was Mr. Chesterton, and his book was an immense success. For the younger generation it supplied exactly what was wanted. They had no need to go for interpreters to the too solemn lucubrations of ageing members of the Browning Society. The eminent Victorian poet, dead fourteen years, was sponsored by one of the liveliest, soon to be one of the most famous, of the Edwardians. To those who read Browning because of Browning were added those who read Browning because of Chesterton.

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And then—what happened? One might perhaps say that during the war we warehoused a large part of our library;

after the war we took back some of it from the warehouse and left the rest. Browning was on the whole left in the warehouse. A new generation was growing up, believing itself, not altogether rightly, to be in a new world. It wanted new prophets, and it would only take such of the old prophets as the new prophets chose to introduce to it. Moreover, as I said before, 'there is a tide', and Browning's prolonged high tide had to be followed by an ebb. There is a curious passage in Guizot where he is discussing the causes of the decline of the crusading impulse. He says in effect: 'Some writers have said that men were weary of the crusades; which is nonsense, for one generation cannot be wearied by the fatigues undergone by its predecessors.' But Guizot was evidently no psychologist. One suffers mental fatigue from the mere contemplation of the labours of one's predecessors, and a new generation, if it cannot fulfil the Homeric boast of being better than its fathers, is at least animated by a very commendable desire to be different from them. Browning was one of the poets they were always talking about at home; how much more exhilarating to take up with poets unknown to the parental library. Moreover, Browning was long, and one had no time for length; he was 'hearty' and 'healthy' and 'manly'—tedious attributes; he was an incorrigible optimist; he slapped you on the back with his 'All's love and All's law', and his

> God's in his heaven,
> Dinner's at seven,
> All's right with the world—

or words to that effect. He paraded the jocularity of a bachelor uncle; he became suddenly grave and talked about one's soul and heaven, and all that sort of thing. In fact one simply did not want him. The fastidious and classical few, Santayana for example, who had always refused to bow down before Browning, were right after all.

Thus it is possible for a very good and very typical modern critic, Mr. F. L. Lucas, to write: 'Something has come between us to-day and Tennyson and Browning, the Jachin and Boaz of that Solomon's temple, the Victorian era. It is the

presence of a pontifical didacticism based upon a philosophy of life we cannot share, which alloys their veritable gold. No doubt there are still persons who enjoy being slapped on the back because "Morning's at seven" and "Heaven" rhymes with it; but in living poets that note is fortunately absent.' And again, more savagely: 'The twentieth century has not been particularly rich in good poets, even good minors; but at least they have not paraded that complacent and obtuse satisfaction with human life, which Browning once flaunted as fashionably as a white tie. Better any wormwood than that saccharine.'

Mr. Lucas complains of a philosophy in Browning which 'we cannot share', and finds that it 'alloys his veritable gold'. It does more; it obviously acts upon Mr. Lucas as an irritant. We are irritated by philosophies that we have very recently discarded. Philosophies irritate while they are dying. When they have been long dead they cease to trouble us, and our enjoyment of the poetry in which they are embalmed is unaffected by their presence in it. No reader of Lucretius is irritated by his epicurean materialism; no reader of Dante by his medieval cosmogony; no reader of *Paradise Lost* by Milton's extraordinary perversions of Christian theology. The final estimate of Browning—if there is such a thing as a final estimate of any poet, which may be doubted—is certainly not that of 1930 any more than it was that of 1890. Perhaps I may then, in conclusion, be allowed to amuse or annoy the reader by offering some sort of forecast of how Browning's reputation may stand with a generation to whom the post-war era is as remote an historical curiosity as the Victorian age.

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I have already quoted one, and might have quoted several, comparisons between Browning and Shakespeare. The comparison indeed was inevitable, and its appropriateness must be admitted even by those who set at its longest the interval by which the Victorian falls short of the Elizabethan poet. Even Santayana, for example, who dislikes Browning, opens his attack upon him with a comparison of his demerits with the merits of Shakespeare, a gambit which would not con-

ceivably be employed by any one writing an essay in depreciation of, say, Tennyson, Arnold, or Swinburne. Both poets were, first and foremost, exponents in poetry of the subtleties of human character, and this fact sets them apart from all the other greater English poets from Spenser to the present day. But they have another point in common. Both of them were eminently prolific, abundant, uncritical, unfastidious in output. Both of them were like that early Roman satirist of whom Horace said, not by way of compliment, that he could write six hundred lines *stans pede in uno.* King George III said that there was 'much sad stuff' in Shakespeare, and Whig historians have quoted the remark as an illustration of the obtuseness of the monarch who, far more successfully than Disraeli, 'dished the Whigs'. But it was a very sensible remark, for it is true. How otherwise would it be possible for a whole army of scholars to be now at work, profitably or unprofitably, treating Shakespeare as their predecessors treated the Old Testament, and parcelling out the Shakespearian canon among a crowd of minor Elizabethans? There is some 'sad stuff' even in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth,* and in some of the plays which most of us do not read there are wide deserts of 'sad stuff' amid which the strokes of genius are as rare as oases in the Sahara. Nobody judges Shakespeare by his 'sad stuff', nor will Browning be judged by his.

And let it be granted that the 'sad stuff' of Browning is abundant. There is altogether about him, as about his contemporaries Carlyle and Meredith, a very obvious too-muchness, a *diarrhoea verborum.* Many of the really good poems are twenty per cent., or fifty per cent., or a hundred per cent. too long; the profoundly conceived and exquisitely written *Cleon,* for example, contains a long superfluous and crabbed passage which every reader, I should suppose, must wish away. There are many poems, long and short, which we could wish away altogether. One can admire, at a distance, the astonishing dexterity which produced them, for there are, in truth, hardly any exhibitions of mere weakness in Browning; no mere 'gas' or twaddle. But the labour that

made them is somehow lost; they have no abiding use or beauty.

And what remains? Surely a great deal.

Browning will come to be recognized as one of the greatest masters of the greatest of English poetic measures, blank verse. His blank verse has a wider range than that of any other English poet, for he can use it not only for high poetry but also, very effectively, for the purposes for which Shakespeare used prose. At one end of the scale, he is a master of the slow moving, artfully composed, highly ornamented style, *gravissimus atque ornatissimus,* in which of course both Milton and Tennyson surpassed him. Browning's best and most characteristic work does not lie here; none the less, I think that *Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli* is a good poem of its kind. At the other end of the scale he uses blank verse with unequalled skill and power for humorous conversational purposes. It is only necessary to mention *Bishop Blougram* as a moderate example and *Dominus Hyacinthus,* the 'first lawyer' in *The Ring and the Book,* as an extreme example of this art. (No doubt it takes a classical education to appreciate *Dominus Hyacinthus,* as it does also to appreciate the finer points of *Paradise Lost.* There is humour in Browning which stands higher only because it is less esoteric.) In this conversational style Browning wrote hundreds—nay thousands—of lines of a quality only rivalled in the best parts of *Don Juan.*

But the best of Browning's blank verse lies in a middle region between *Rudel* and *Blougram.* Its qualities are ease, grace, strength, and, chief of all, rapidity. To adduce illustrations would be to suggest that its quantity was limited. One might almost as well offer a quotation to prove that Homer could write hexameters. This admirable blank verse is the common form of all the best-known *Men and Women* and the greater Books of *The Ring and the Book.*

Apart from blank verse, Browning used, and used with triumphant skill, a greater range of metrical forms than any other English poet. A cursory examination of the popular selection that used to be known, I think, as the *Shilling*

Selection will forcibly remind any reader of this fact. To take at random a few examples of this versatility: *One Word More*, *The Patriot*, *Instans Tyrannus*, *The Last Ride*, *The Statue and the Bust*, *The Grammarian's Funeral*, *Childe Roland*, *The Laboratory*, *A Woman's Last Word*, *Abt Vogler*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *Prospice*, *The Householder*, *Epilogue* to *Fcrishtah*, *Fears and Scruples*, *Now*, *Saul*, *Love among the Ruins*. One is inclined to say that there is every metre in Browning except the no-metre of *vers libre*. Probably he thought that too easy to be interesting.

When we pass from metre to style we are on ground not less sure but less easy to explore and illustrate. Browning was not, on the whole, a master of that verbal magic in which some even of the minor poets, such as the author of the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, have excelled. He has few of those 'jewels five words long, That on the stretch'd fore-finger of all Time, Sparkle for ever'. He has many quotable and much-quoted phrases, such as 'the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin', but they are masterpieces of epigram rather than of pure poetry; they are not 'magic casements'. Browning produces overwhelming effects in the sphere of pure poetry, but he produces them, as it were, by accumulation, and not by the sudden flashlight of a single inspired line. The Pope's invocation of Pompilia, for example, is very great poetry, far greater, I should say, than Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*, which is perhaps not great poetry at all; certainly it is not the best of Tennyson. But there are no single lines in it on which we have seized and made our own, such as

> Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

or

> And on the mere the wailing died away.

The reader may think I am tempting him to say 'So much the better for Browning'; so I will put Browning in his place and add that there is in the Pope's invocation of Pompilia no single line of the calibre of

> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

If I were to select one merit of Browning's style at its best,

a merit which I think will wear very well, I should select what I will call austerity. Take the following very familiar stanza:

> I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
> Since now at length my fate I know,
> Since nothing all my love avails,
> Since all my life seemed meant for, fails,
> Since this was written and needs must be—
> My whole heart rises up to bless
> Your name in pride and thankfulness!
> Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
> Only a memory of the same,
> And this beside, if you will not blame,
> Your leave for one more last ride with me.

The last two lines have not quite the verbal inevitability of the nine that precede them, and I would not maintain that the remainder of the poem has not weak passages in it, but that opening seems to me the kind of thing that only great poets can write. It seems made to last.

Many great poets are praised for their use of simile and of metaphor. I do not think Browning need fear comparison with many English poets in this field. I will adduce only three examples of the extended simile: the 'sick man very near to death' in *Childe Roland*, 'As when a drudging student trims his lamp' at the end of the *Caponsacchi*, and the simile of the flower in the passage from *The Pope* to which I have already alluded.

The English have excelled in the poetry of nature. Browning was not a nature poet at all in the sense in which that term applies to Wordsworth and Shelley, but he had an extraordinary gift for describing certain kinds of scenery. There is *Childe Roland*, and there is the astonishing passage in *The Flight of the Duchess*, ending with the line

> And the whole is our Duke's country.

Browning was a forerunner of the moderns (no great glory that, perhaps) in that he reopened to English poetry fields from which it had almost entirely withdrawn since the overwhelming seriousness of the Romantics had discredited the tradition of Pope and Byron. I have mentioned his

humour. There is indeed a certain amount of jocularity in Browning which we could very well do without. I am for my part quite willing to throw to the post-Victorian wolves the poem which ends by asking 'What porridge had John Keats?' and many others. There is also that deplorable pun on Newman and Wiseman. No doubt it is no worse than Juliet's pun on 'I' and 'aye' and 'eye', but then Shakespeare knew no better, and Browning ought to have done so. Still, tedious jocularity apart, there is a wealth of profound humour, sardonic wit, and wisdom to be found in Browning. I should like to quote *in extenso* the passage about what

Religion used to tell Humanity

on the subject of judicial torture, especially as it is an admirable example of Browning's most characteristic type of blank verse. But it is rather too long in itself, and also should be read in its immediate context. I must therefore ask the reader to turn, if he has forgotten it or has never read it, to *The Ring and the Book*, Bk. I, ll. 943–1015. He will not be unrewarded for his pains.

Browning also brought the 'short story', especially the short story of the psychologico-sensational type, within the compass of English poetry. Consider, for example, such a poem as *Porphyria's Lover*, a study of the painfully familiar fact that ardent young lovers are extremely apt to kill their girls. Such a poem is obviously not in the highest class; it does not set out to claim a place there, but is it not quite extraordinarily good in its own kind? His Victorian admirers claimed for Browning an immense range of 'love-poetry'. Some of it, and some of the best of it, we should not perhaps call love-poetry to-day; but as an explorer in poetry of the curiosities of sexual relationship Browning did some admirable pioneer work. It need hardly be said that post-Victorians have gone further, but it might be added that they have fared worse.

And if Browning gave us dozens of poetical equivalents of the psychological *conte* he also gave us rather more than the equivalent of a three-decker Victorian novel in *The Ring and the Book*.

The immense development of prose literature seems to have made the production of an entirely satisfactory 'long poem' an almost impossible achievement. It is surely no accident that the greatest of all long poems was written (if indeed it was written) almost before people had learnt to write, much less to print. The *Aeneid* is less satisfactory than the *Iliad*; *Paradise Lost* is less satisfactory than the *Aeneid*, and no later English long poem is as satisfactory as *Paradise Lost*. None the less it will perhaps be found that England in the nineteenth century 'and after' produced three long poems which, if they failed, are yet failures more splendid than ninety-nine out of a hundred successes, poems which, on account of the grandeur of their design and the abundant splendours of their parts, deserve the award of *proxime accessit*. They are, of course, *The Prelude*, *The Ring and the Book*, and *The Dynasts*. There is much that can be said against *The Ring and the Book*. One may suspect that Browning set out to play the judge and ended by playing the advocate. Perhaps Pompilia got a little mixed up with Mrs. Browning, in which case, of course, Browning became Caponsacchi, and Mr. Barrett had to assume the role of Guido; by all accounts he very nearly deserved it. I have always had an uneasy feeling that the 'one lesson' which is offered to the 'British Public' in the last paragraph of the last Book may have fitted the epic as originally conceived, but is in flagrant contradiction with it in the form it ultimately assumed. I will also admit that the piece of symbolism from which the poem takes its name is tiresomely far-fetched and, in the last analysis, inappropriate. The name itself, so much more suggestive of Newmarket than of Arezzo, is sadly unworthy of the poem. But what of these, and of sundry other defects? The poem is great enough to carry all of them and far more. And it is a mistake to assume that about three Books contain all that is permanently valuable in the poem; it would be much nearer the truth to say that only about three Books can, without serious loss, be omitted.

And lastly there is Browning's 'message', his 'philosophical and religious teaching', and all those things about which so

much used reverently to be said; the Browning to whom, along with St. John and (oddly enough) Origen, Bishop Westcott was so much indebted, the Browning who made his *Pope* divagate into seven hundred lines of theological speculation before delivering his verdict upon Guido. Well; the Victorian age was a very curious period of history. It was an age in which all kinds of things were moving with unprecedented rapidity, and in which, as a consequence, men's minds were more than usually adrift. It was one of those ages in which the best minds were peculiarly hungry for faith and peculiarly beset with doubt and dissatisfied with creeds. The present generation is, to judge from the contemporary output of books, very much interested in that age, though it prefers secondary authorities to the original documents. Perhaps such ages are intrinsically and permanently interesting. If the Victorian age remains a matter of permanent interest, then it is likely that what the Victorians had to say for themselves will prove more permanently interesting than what the Georgians are now saying about the Victorians; and among the Victorian 'documents' the 'teaching' of Robert Browning is likely to occupy a place, if only because that teaching was in fact so eagerly welcomed in its own day.

Still, as Mr. F. L. Lucas has said, that teaching interposes a barrier between us and the poetry which was made its vehicle. It is a pity; and if it is partly our fault, no doubt it is partly Browning's fault also. But if there are faults on both sides, the misfortune is wholly ours, for whether or not Browning has gone to the extraordinary place which he indicated as his destination in the *Epilogue* to *Asolando*, one can hardly suppose that he is worried by the present slump in his reputation. I have speculated, somewhat rashly, on what a distant posterity will think about Browning; but what will it think about ourselves? We shall be noted, perhaps, for the admirable abundance of our good prose, for the tenuity and artificiality of our poetry, and—among other things—for the strange fact that we could not appreciate Browning!

D. C. Somervell.

SOME KINDS OF POETIC DICTION

THE subject of Poetic Diction is once again attracting the attention of critics, and Professor Elton's article in the last number of *Essays and Studies* may perhaps be taken as a sign of the times. Yet one is still struck by the difficulty and vastness of the subject, and by the want of a certain clue to its labyrinths. It is strange how little thought was given to the theory of Poetic Diction, as such, before the time of Wordsworth and Coleridge. May one suppose that this is due in part to the example and authority of the Greek critics? In choosing to write in detail of Rhetoric, Aristotle seems to have decided the main course which the criticism of literary language was to follow right down to the end of the Renaissance; and though the subject of Rhetoric overlaps in part with that of Poetic Diction, it ignores the all-important boundary between poetry and prose. Again, the author of the *Περὶ ὕψους* frequently touches on the question of elevated language, but his wider and more philosophic purpose prevents him from dealing with the technical side of the subject. Dante and various other writers have attended to the needs of literary or poetic expression at a particular time; but the scope of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* is too limited, and its aim too practical, to allow it to serve as a guide to general principles. The question whether the use of metre demands a special variety of diction seems generally to have occupied a subsidiary place in literary criticism until the time of Wordsworth and Coleridge; and even they with all their philosophy have the practical needs of their own age very much in mind, though Coleridge is often superbly suggestive and could, had he wished, have written the classical work on the subject. It might, perhaps, be wiser to learn from the past and avoid a topic so unpopular. Yet all careful readers of English poetry must have seen that the choice of a single word often brings them face to face with the very soul of poetic inspiration. English, more-

over, is a language which, perhaps beyond all others, allows poetry the liberty to make or re-create the life of its words. For these reasons alone the subject of Poetic Diction is a challenge to English criticism; and fortunately we are still at a stage when no writer who presumes to express his ideas need be suspected of trying to utter the final word.

I

No better introduction to the study of Poetic Diction can be found than a passage in one of Gray's letters to Richard West (April 1742).

> 'The language of the age', he says, 'is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself; to which almost everyone that has written, has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives: nay, sometimes words of their own composition or invention. Shakespear and Milton have been great creators this way; and no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. . . . Our language not being a settled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of an hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible. In truth, Shakespear's language is one of his principal beauties. Every word in him is a picture.'

Better evidence of perceptive reading than these remarks it would be hard to find anywhere: nearly all the essential features of our poetic language are mentioned. Foremost in Gray's mind is the style of Shakespeare, which is in truth one of the cardinal facts in our poetic history, and he connects it with the state of English in its most creative period when the chief standard by which words were judged was their power of vivid expression. He has noticed, too, that less creative writers like Dryden and Pope draw much on the vocabulary of their great predecessors, a fact which Sir Walter Raleigh has amply illustrated in a chapter of his *Milton*. The hint of the difference between English and French might well be developed into a broader distinction, for, clearly,

Latin and the Romance languages make 'law' rather than 'freedom', 'custom' rather than 'individuality', the test for poetry and prose alike; while others, such as Greek, English, and German, allow poets a larger right of word-creation. Finally, Gray's simple remark 'Our poetry has a language peculiar to itself' might be illustrated from almost every writer of verse, good or bad, of the last three centuries, and it corrects by anticipation Wordsworth's amazing paradox: 'There neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.'

It might, however, still be asked whether the distinction between poetry and prose is a real one; and it could be argued, no doubt, that the existence of 'poetic prose' proves the difference to be one of degree, not of kind. This, however, is not so; by far the greater part of our poetic diction has been fashioned in verse, and even the chief masters of poetic prose—Ruskin, for instance—are the borrowers, not the creators, of their language. The need of poetry for special words and expressions of its own may be illustrated from the practice of many nations. The Greeks had their dialectal forms and their bold compounds; the Anglo-Saxons and Icelanders their 'kennings'; even the Romans and Italians allowed verse certain words and usages of its own, and that the French kept the language of prose less closely than one might imagine from Gray may be seen from the compilation called *Le Gradus Français*. The evidence which is drawn from the various literatures is confirmed a hundred-fold when one appeals to the poets themselves for the grounds of their practice. No one has described the character of poetic diction better than Shelley, no one has distinguished it more clearly from the language of prose. 'The language of poets', he says, 'is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then, if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the

nobler purposes of human intercourse.' Shelley has here clearly shown the true nature of poetic word-creation. Poets are not especially distinguished for the 'manufacture' of words. They share this honour with others—with writers such as Sir Thomas Browne, who, steeped in the learned languages, coined words like 'antediluvian', 'hallucination', 'precarious', by the score, and even with such men as Mr. George Eastman, who, apparently on no foundation whatever, created the word 'kodak'. Poets have also been word-makers in these senses—Milton, for instance, formed the learned 'Pandaemonium', and the earliest known use of the verb 'to coo' occurs in Dryden—but it is their peculiar privilege and glory to find new and striking uses for old and familiar words. 'A word', wrote Bernard Bosanquet, 'is quite strictly speaking not used twice in the same sense.' It is poetry rather than prose that brings home to us the truth of this saying.

II

It probably needed the *New English Dictionary* to bring home to our minds how large a part of our vocabulary is 'poetic' and 'rhetorical'. One never has to turn many pages of the Dictionary before meeting a word so described; and it is strange to consider how many words there are which one recognizes as familiar, but never uses. Poetry, like religion, has its ritual—an accumulation of forms once freshly significant, and now sacred by association. The great majority of words in this class are synonyms, more or less exact, of more familiar words, and as such would appear to the dully prosaic or severely scientific mind as merely superfluous. One could quickly compile a long list—'deep' and 'main' for 'sea', 'steed' for 'horse', 'eke' for 'also', 'lay' for 'song', 'glebe' for 'land', 'swart' or 'sable' for 'dark', 'visitant' for 'visitor', 'marish' for 'marsh'—'all these and more come flocking'. Of most of these words, the hardest critic cannot say much worse than that the reader will endure them and that the poet, with his metrical and rhyming anxieties, may find them convenient. Of course, the members

of this list do not all stand on the same footing. Some, like 'nymph' and 'swain', which the dictionary is content to label 'poetic', carry a taint of affectation. In others, such as 'plough' used of a ship cleaving the surface of the sea, one may recognize traces of a vigorous metaphor not wholly obliterated by use. 'Poetic ritual', indeed, has much the same qualities as language in general, which—to quote Bosanquet once more—is 'up to a certain point . . . poetry ready-made for us'.

At its best, 'poetic ritual' is a kind of anonymous poetry, and in some works it takes a peculiarly beautiful and impressive form. This is especially so in poems which are themselves the product as much of a people as of an individual writer. Much epic poetry of the kind which used to be called 'natural' owes a large part of its attraction to this kind of language. The 'kennings' of *Beowulf*, for instance, are a saving grace in many a long stretch of dreary narrative, and every one who has had to read that work in full must remember how his spirits revived when he found a boat called a 'flota' or the sea a 'swan-rād'. In Homer, the recurring epithets are some of the chief glories of the language. It would be difficult to find anywhere words more striking or beautiful than the familiar *ῥοδοδάκτυλος*, *νεφεληγερέτα*, *πολύφλοισβος*, *εἰνοσίφυλλος*, and the rest. It is one of the features of epic poetry that such words are often used at the expense of strict dramatic propriety. Homer's heroes often pause to insert a highly ornamental epithet which is, in one sense, little more appropriate than the exquisite imagery put by Keats into the mouths of the murderous brothers in *Isabella*. Failure to recognize this impersonal quality of much epic language causes Ruskin in his chapter on the Pathetic Fallacy to give a very doubtful explanation of the phrase *φυσίζοος αἶα* in *Iliad*, III, 243:

> 'Note, here,' he says, 'the high poetical truth carried to the extreme. The poet has to speak of the earth in sadness, but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thoughts of it. No; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving.'

Is it not more natural to regard φυσίζοος as similar to so many of Homer's other epithets which are merely ornamental words? But whatever the truth in this particular instance, it is undeniable that the author of the *Iliad* is not individually responsible for every word he uses. Many of his most beautiful epithets are little unsigned poems.

In the history of the conventional 'poetic' words in English, three or four points call for particular notice. In the first place very few of the poetic synonyms still current date back to a time before Spenser. Many of the words themselves, of course, are much older; but it was Spenser, more than any other one man, who began to preserve for poetry words which would otherwise have fallen into disuse. The gulf between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries is wide and profound. In the fourteenth century some old poetic phrases of great antiquity still lingered, embedded in alliterative verse,—'bright in bower', for instance—but most of these died with the medieval romance, though a few may have lingered on in the popular ballads. But Chaucer, who avoided alliterative verse, also avoided its vocabulary. Probably there is none of our greater poets who, in all his best work, kept closer to the 'real language of men'. Occasionally, in descriptive passages written in a stately and almost epic manner, he allows himself an ornamental phrase such as 'Mars armipotente' in *The Knight's Tale*. But his general practice, in narrative and dialogue, was to use simple words—words expressive of his humorous, ironical temper. His successors and imitators were not so happily inspired. Many of them succumbed to the allurements of 'Rhetoric' which were so potent in the late Middle Ages, and the affectation of 'aureate' language mars the work of a poet so late and so excellent as Drummond of Hawthornden. How extravagant this fashion became may be seen from phrases like 'hylair vult' and 'suddant mort' in John Rolland's *Court of Venus*. Rolland, like Drummond, was a Scottish poet: in England the influence of the past was weaker, and the poets who learnt afresh the art of versification at the beginning of the sixteenth century were also freer from bad traditions of language.

That Spenser should have devised a poetic diction of his own based principally on old words was natural enough. The practice of Homer himself was his authority; but he had quite a sufficient motive in the needs of his own imagination. A poet whose mind dwelt so much in the past and the ideal could only express himself in language remote from common life. Spenser's use of *als*, *ne*, *whilom*, *eke*, *drowsihead*, *wight* and the countless other old words which help to give his style its character was a necessary part of his plan. Dramatists, like Jonson, whose professed aim it was to 'paint an image of the times', might sneer at Spenser's practice, but outside the theatre it had many admirers. Milton in his early life was a pupil of Spenser, and he saw how descriptive verse and the longer lyric may be enriched from words just passing out of fashion. The line

In Heav'n ycleap'd *Euphrosyne*

openly admits descent from Spenser's style, and among the many elements of Milton's vocabulary in *Paradise Lost*, archaic words have a place. By the end of the seventeenth century, the practice introduced by Spenser had become firmly established, and even so worldly and 'modern' a poet as Dryden draws freely on old-fashioned words. For illustration, one cannot do better than quote from Gray's own list in the letter to West: 'Full of *museful mopeings*—a *roundelay* of love—stood silent in his *mood*—his *boon* was granted—the *foiled dodderd* oaks—the *beldam* at his side.' These and the other examples quoted by Gray are quite characteristic, and it may be noted in passing that Dryden retains some measure of Elizabethan freedom and is not afraid to introduce a Latin word such as 'stridor', or to use rare forms like 'flatted' and 'steepy'. Though the opportunity for word-creation has diminished, the use of old words and forms in verse is as firmly rooted as ever—indeed, it is taken for granted, so that poetic diction of this kind is scarcely noticed.

This, however, is not the whole truth. If 'poetic ritual' were at best no more than a convention or convenience, its use might be difficult to justify. To the purist, at least to

a critic as earnest and iconoclastic as Wordsworth is in his *Preface,* there might appear to be a good case for sweeping the whole thing away in the name of Truth and Nature. But few of the words which time or association have made 'poetic' are, on a close examination, mere synonyms for familiar words. In many of them there is some shade of meaning or some charm of association which the artist can easily call forth. It is said, for instance, that 'deep' is a synonym for 'sea'; but this is only a rough and approximate truth. In the solemn phrase of the Prayer for the Burial of the Dead at Sea, 'We therefore commit his body to the deep', the poetic synonym touches an emotion beyond the reach of the commoner word. A striking instance of the value of this kind of language is furnished by a passage from Byron which Mr. A. C. Bradley quotes in one of his lectures:

> Bring forth the horse!—The horse was brought;
> In truth, he was a noble steed.

Here, as Mr. Bradley notes, the substitution of 'horse' for 'steed' and 'steed' for 'horse' renders the second line a ludicrous anti-climax:

> Bring forth the steed!—The steed was brought;
> In truth, he was a noble horse.

Byron's use of words in the passage quoted is a genuine instance of poetic writing; the unseen or latent qualities of a word are brought to light. To depend much on words cherished for their associations is one of the most dangerous things a poet can do: Milton, indeed, can give the imprint of his mind to every word he writes, but a vocabulary so rich and various would completely overwhelm a man of inferior power. A style may easily recall too vividly the sources from which it is drawn. This, surely, is a defect of some of Swinburne's poems, in which the vocabulary is too purely Biblical. He seems to rely almost mechanically on the glamour which has gathered round simple English of the best period. Nor is the studied diction of the highly cultured poet who admits no word without a long literary pedigree comparable to that of the men who rely on their own power

to ennoble whatever they touch. The sestet of a sonnet by one of the finest living artists in expression will illustrate the limitations of a too finely selected vocabulary:

> So betwixt Peace and War man's life is cast;
> Yet hath he dreamed of perfect Peace at last
> Shepherding all the nations ev'n as sheep.
> The inconstant moody ocean shall as soon,
> At the cold dictates of the bloodless moon,
> Swear an eternity of halcyon sleep.

There could hardly be a more august assemblage of words. The main elements are Biblical or Elizabethan, the decorations, such as 'shepherding' and 'halcyon', are highly 'poetic'. But what of the total effect? The reader has only to compare these lines with, say, the sestet of Wordsworth's sonnet *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic* to see that fine words do not always make the finest poems. One of the chief signs of a great poet's work is that his language is subdued by the authority of his presence.

III

As a contrast to the excessive dependence upon ornate and 'poetic' language, it is useful to consider a few cases in which highly literary words and phrases are incorporated into a poem without weakening its originality. The learning of a writer like Browning is too often a mere intellectual possession; the learning of a Milton or Gray has been largely assimilated by the imagination. Milton's style, indeed, is in many places a mosaic of literary reminiscences; but he was one by whom knowledge was 'not purchased by the loss of power'. As the learned names resound through his verse—Busiris, Memphis, Mulciber, and the rest—one is impressed, not so much by the debt he owes to literature, as by the superbly poetic manner in which he has read. A great poet confers as many obligations as he receives. No reader of Gray's *Elegy* feels any disappointment in meeting the phrase 'mutas agitare inglorius artes' in the Twelfth *Aeneid*. Rather, Virgil's line receives a reflected interest from the

memorable line which it suggested. A remarkable instance of literary reminiscence—not noticed, I think, hitherto—occurs in Wordsworth's *Laodamia*, a poem written after its author had tacitly abandoned his principle of 'natural language'. Wordsworth had evidently been studying the Sixth *Aeneid*, and some two hundred lines after the mention of 'Laodamia' had met these words:

> Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
> Purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.
>
> (ll. 640–1.)

This passage contributes three significant words to the description of Elysium in *Laodamia*:

> An ampler *ether*, a diviner air,
> And fields *invested* with *purpureal* gleams.

Wordsworth's indebtedness to Virgil is a singular comment on his theory of Poetic Diction. It is impossible for any poet to be wholly original in his language. Though Wordsworth's lines contain an echo from the *Aeneid* they are original in the only sense that matters. The idea of a natural diction that owes nothing to literature is a chimera.

IV

Of the many diseases which afflict poetry, the one nearest to our present purpose is the False Poetic Diction of the eighteenth century. The cult of 'aureate' language and the Elizabethan taste for 'conceits' do not in the same way raise the fundamental questions of poetic expression. The peculiar interest of False Poetic Diction lies in its subtle mixture of good and evil. Its cause was a failure to perceive the delicate dependence of words upon their context. Its essence is discord, and it is the result of obtuse perception.

In regarding Pope and his imitators as members of a new school of poetry, it is easy to forget that they were nearly all admirers and students of our earlier literature. Their mistake was the habit of mingling the language of former ages with that of their own. Pope finally became master of a brilliant idiomatic style which in certain poems, such as

the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, is not far from perfect. But when he attempts to use the language required for description of natural scenery—a task for which he was ill fitted—the result is usually execrable. *Windsor Forest* contains some of the worst examples of language misapplied to be found anywhere in our literature. The author is clearly relying on the power of a carefully chosen vocabulary to take the place of feeling, but the absence of feeling betrays itself at every line. Decorative words scattered in profusion—*chequered, verdant, sylvan, azure, Tyrian, sable*—only bring out the poet's impotence. At best, their effect is purely neutral, as in the couplet:

> Here waving groves a chequered scene display,
> And part admit, and part exclude the day ;

but at times one lights on a real abomination:

> See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crowned,
> Here blushing Flora paints th' enamelled ground.

Pope would probably have defended these lines by remarking that every word in them of any significance—waving, scene, chequered, blushing, paint, enamelled, Pan, Pomona, and Flora—is to be found in descriptive passages by Milton. To which the answer would be: Precisely so; they are Milton's words and you have done nothing to make them your own. A poet in his natural dress may be excellent, but in borrowed robes he is grotesque.

The mistake made by Pope in his early poems was the besetting sin of the age. There were few poets who did not frequently dress themselves in borrowed clothing. Dick Minim, in *The Rambler*, advised the young aspirant in poetry 'to think how Milton would have thought'. In practice this advice was interpreted to mean: Borrow Milton's most characteristic expressions, and form a few of your own on their analogy. If ever a word was made a man's own by his memorable use of it, surely it is 'descant' in Milton's lovely line on the nightingale:

> She all night long her amorous descant sung.

The men of the eighteenth century saw the beauty of this word and could not leave it alone—it seemed so admirable a variant to 'song' or 'lay'. Thus Gray uses it in the sonnet analysed by Wordsworth:

> The birds in vain their amorous descant join—

which is a tolerable line. But Shenstone, a very unequal poet, puts the word into a stanza of trite expressions and trivial rhythm which degrade it shamefully:

> Come then, Dione, let us range the grove,
> The science of the feather'd choirs explore,
> Hear linnets argue, larks descant of love,
> And blame the gloom of solitude no more.

Similarly, the delicate expression 'nodding violet' which is infinitely beautiful in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, its native soil, is uprooted by Joseph Warton and put into company with the commonest verbal tinsel:

> When Phoebus sinks behind the gilded hills,
> You lightly o'er the misty meadows walk,
> The drooping daisies bathe in honey-dews,
> And nurse the nodding violet's tender stalk.

False taste of this kind is more insidious and more destructive to the beauty of language than the pompous phrases which ape Milton's sublimity. For the finer beauty of words may be destroyed for ever by false associations; but time and the change of fashion may be trusted to expose the absurdity of calling a flock of sheep 'the meadow's fleecy store', or cannon-balls 'large globous irons'.

V

In turning to the creative aspects of Poetic Diction, it is natural to look for some general idea or principle as a guide; what, asks the inquirer, have the ancient critics to say? It is easy enough to find in classical writers maxims which enforce the virtue of lucidity. Thus, Quintilian's 'Consuetudo certissima linguae magistra' is an excellent guide to the writer of sober prose who cannot too often be reminded of

the rule 'Safety first'. But to poetic enthusiasm the counsel is a little chilling. Aristotle in the *Poetics* gives more encouragement to the poet's desire for bold and beautiful expression, but he also insists on the importance of lucidity: λέξεως δὲ ἀρετὴ σαφῆ καὶ μὴ ταπεινὴν εἶναι. Romanticism opened the way to a franker enjoyment of poetic 'colour', and in the *Journal des Goncourts* there is a remark which few classical writers would have cared to make: 'L'épithète rare, voilà la marque du poète.' With a slight extension of meaning these words might be taken as a true description of poetic language, for it is the distinguishing feature of poetry as compared with prose to use more *noticeable* words. Put briefly, scientific prose and matter-of-fact description need words which are fixed and definite in meaning; poetry, words which are susceptible of subtle variations in sense and suggestiveness. More briefly still, science uses lifeless words, while poetry creates living ones. Shelley's saying that poets are the 'authors of language' is literally true.

But how is a poet to put life into old words, to make familiar language seem a fresh creation? To consider this question in detail would take us into a wider region than the somewhat artificially limited province of Poetic Diction. The effect of a great scene or passage which imprints itself in living words on the reader's memory is clearly due to the sum total of a poet's powers, not merely to his skill as an artist in expression. The parting of Hector and Andromache, for instance, is told by Homer in very simple words, all of which, however, are so deeply affecting as to seem written in fire. But this result is due to something far deeper than verbal skill; it is brought about by the poet's penetrating insight into human relations, and by a skilful preparation leading to an anticipated climax. Passages of the same nature may indeed be found in which the poet has concentrated a world of feeling into a few significant words. In the last book of the *Iliad*, for instance, where Priam meets Achilles, the effect of the epithet applied to the hands which have slain the old man's son, *ἀνδροφόνους*, is tremendous. But in general the art of Poetic Diction is better studied in

passages where the author is not dealing with great or moving passions. Description is evidently more dependent on the author's verbal skill than drama. Among epic poets, Virgil is more dependent on his language than Homer, and there is an element of truth, even, in the harsh criticism of Coleridge, 'If you take from Virgil his diction and metre, what do you leave him?' Virgil, at any rate, is a poet who relies greatly on the single expressive word, and the beautiful adjective which he applies to the poplar-tree, 'bicolor', is a perfect example of the 'épithète rare'. 'The charm of all the Muses' really flowers in this 'lonely word'.

Observation and fancy, sensibility and a fine feeling for language are the qualities which make the great artist in poetic expression. A nature so constituted will mould words anew and yet respect the genius of the language in which it works. Pope was essentially a poet who thought in phrases rather than large designs; and on ground that suits him, he often shows the highest skill in his choice of the expressive word. Here is a passage justly praised for this reason by Joseph Warton, who prints the most striking words in italics:

> Like some *lone* Chartreux stands the good old hall,
> *Silence* without, and fasts within the wall;
> No *rafter*'d roofs with dance and tabor sound,
> No *noontide* bell invites the country round:
> Tenants with sighs the *smoakless* tow'rs survey.
> And turn th' unwilling steeds another way:
> *Benighted wanderers*, the forest o'er,
> Curse the *sav'd candle*, and *unop'ning* door;
> While the *gaunt* mastiff, *growling* at the gate,
> *Affrights* the beggar, whom he longs to eat.

A still greater artist in this kind of writing is Tennyson, whose works are an inexhaustible treasury of felicitous phrases. Tennyson shows that sure mark of mastery in poetic expression—the power to use familiar words in a manner which seems to reveal their significance for the first time. Who knew what suggestions of drowsiness lay in the word 'afternoon' until he read *The Lotos-Eaters*?

In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemèd always afternoon.

Tennyson has, too, his favourite words, which seem able to suggest a new picture each time they are used. 'Slope' is an instance:

The swimming vapour *slopes* athwart the glen.
(*Œnone.*)

Till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.
(*Œnone.*)

In some fair space of *sloping* greens.
(*The Palace of Art.*)

Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That *slope* thro' darkness up to God.
(*In Memoriam.*)

With still more striking skill he gives the word 'wrinkled' the most expressive use which, perhaps, it has ever received, in his wonderful fragment *The Eagle*:

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls.

It is possible to get still nearer to this aspect of the poet's art by attending to words which have been deliberately used in a slightly abnormal way to produce that effect of novelty after which poetic diction must constantly strive. The handling of colour-epithets is particularly interesting. Custom assigns certain colours to various objects; but poetry, if it can, will often depart from custom even at the risk of eccentricity. Thus, the obvious epithet for the moon is 'silver', a word which no poet need be ashamed to use, unless, indeed, it sums up all he has to say. But Carlyle, who in his language is sometimes a poet, boldly calls the moon 'blue', and the word far from seeming odd lends a touch of magic to a passage of fine description:

The moon gleams out, hard and blue, riding among hail-clouds; and over St. Abb's Head, a streak of dawn is rising.

In the same spirit Victor Hugo, ignoring altogether the common epithet, calls the moon 'red' and 'white':

J'aime une lune ardente et rouge comme l'or
Se levant dans la brume épaisse, ou bien encor
Blanche au bord d'un nuage sombre.

Of the more modern English poets none is so skilful in giving familiar words the appearance of absolutely new creations as Keats. He is, of course, one of the boldest and most felicitous coiners of new compounds, but many of his most marvellous effects are produced by an original use of the simplest language. Such art as this should not, and indeed cannot, be analysed; but one or two of the features of Keats's poetic vocabulary are particularly significant. In the first place, many of his favourite words indicate simple feelings or sense-impressions; 'cold', 'warm', 'silver', 'weary', and the like. One may trace a word like 'warm' through many a vague and cloying description in the early poems until one comes to the perfect mastery of the line in *The Eve of St. Agnes*:

Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one.

No one has done more to bring out the beauty of English monosyllables. 'Sward', for instance, is one of Keats's poetic discoveries. He uses it tentatively and with no great force in *Sleep and Poetry* (l. 258), then again once or twice in *Endymion*, giving it in Book I, l. 93, an effective association with rustic worship:

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
There stood a marble altar, with a tress
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
Daisies upon the sacred *sward* last eve.

In the *Fragment of an Ode to Maia*, the beauty of the word is even more distinctly revealed:

By bards who died content on pleasant *sward*,
Leaving great verse unto a little clan.

Other words which he loved belong to the class of Tennyson's 'slope', and indicate a peculiar and personal kind of imaginative vision. Of the many instances which might be quoted, some of the most curious are the words *slant, slanting, side-*

long, and *sideways*, which to Keats were strangely pictorial and suggestive. He notices the effect of an object seen aslant in one of his letters. Speaking of the way in which he viewed a certain painting as a schoolboy he says: 'I saw it somewhat sideways, large, prominent, round, and colour'd with magnificence!' In his earlier poems Keats uses these words with an evident fondness, though without giving them the magic effect they have in his later work. In 'I stood tip-toe', for instance, he writes:

> For not the faintest motion could be seen
> Of all the shades that *slanted* o'er the green. (ll. 12, 13.)

In the *Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke*, a swan

> *Slants* his neck beneath the waters bright. (l. 3.)

In *Endymion*, Book IV, ll. 332–3, is a more vivid picture:

> In less time
> Than shoots the *slanted* hail-storm.

Twice in *The Eve of St. Mark* the word, or rather the idea, is used with fine pictorial power:

> Bertha was a maiden fair,
> Dwelling in the old Minster-square;
> From her fire-side she could see,
> *Sidelong*, its rich antiquity.

Again:

> Down she sat, poor cheated soul!
> And struck a lamp from the dismal coal;
> Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
> And *slant* book, full against the glare.

Lastly, the word is used with a miraculous effect in *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*:

> I set her on my pacing steed,
> And nothing else saw all day long;
> For *sideways* would she lean, and sing
> A faery's song.

Words which thus haunt a poet through the whole of his life are among the most fascinating in all the poetic vocabulary. They seem never to lose their power, or to be emptied

of their suggestiveness. Tennyson tells us how as a child he loved to muse over the phrase 'Far—far—away', and Wordsworth, no doubt, would have us believe that he was never more truly a poet than when he did so. Shakespeare, too, had his favourite words, in some of which he seems to have found inexhaustible significance. One example is 'kiss', but there is none so striking as 'gild', which for Shakespeare was not one word but a dozen. Sometimes 'gild' is used to convey a fairly simple metaphor, as in the opening lines of Sonnet XXXIII:

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> *Gilding* pale streams with heavenly alchemy.

In the later plays the word generally conveys suggestions of evil or corruption, though these are of great variety. Lady Macbeth, for instance, *gilds* 'the faces of the grooms' with blood; Goneril to Albany is a '*gilded* serpent'; and in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Caesar recalls that Antony drank

> The *gilded* puddle
> Which beasts would cough at.

It is in this way that poetic language is most creative. The poet discovers endless new shades of meaning for existing words, not violating their accepted sense but modifying it in a manner which the context is able to illumine. Though the state of a language naturally affects the nature of its poetry, there are few obstacles which original genius cannot overcome. If a poet has visions of his own, he will surely compel language to express them, sooner or later.

VI

The condition of a poet's native language, however, is a very important element in his career. There are times when, as Dante found, the 'vulgar tongue' has to be carefully purged of unsuitable words before it is fit for the poet's use. By using the idiom of his own day somewhat too freely,

Browning was betrayed into writing many passages in an abstract and pseudo-scientific style quite unfit for verse. There are times, however, when language has a natural refinement and purity, so that poetic expression is a common and widespread accomplishment. The poetic drama of the Elizabethans was made possible by the condition of the current idiom, which was wonderfully free from unpoetic expressions, whether technical or vulgar. Class-distinctions among words were much rarer then than they have since become.

But Elizabethan English offered the poet another and yet greater advantage. Grammatical usage was so little fixed and the licence to create new words was so great, that a poet could, if he chose, fashion for himself a considerable part of his vocabulary. The dangers which lie in the path of the word-creator are, of course, obvious; and the unskilful might meet such treatment as Marston received from Ben Jonson in *The Poetaster*. Shakespeare himself was, in his earlier plays, comparatively cautious in his use of language. *Richard II*, for instance, reflects the joy of the artist in a beautiful instrument which he manipulates with perfect skill and contentment. But in the later plays there is the confidence of the master who has learnt every rule of language and now dares to break them to secure a larger freedom. Shakespeare rarely, if ever, attempted the task of 'creating' new words; but towards the end of his career he seems to have used the greatest liberty in forming new words from existing roots. Here, of course, we are on uncertain ground. Many words are found for the first time in Shakespeare, but it cannot be certainly assumed that he invented them. In some instances, however, there can be little doubt. 'Incarnadine', for example, as a verb meaning 'to crimson' is universally admitted to be Shakespeare's creation; and as the earliest known use of 'multitudinous' occurs in the same line, may it not be conjectured that he invented that word as well? However that may be, the later plays contain a surprising number of apparently new words; and a select list from *King Lear* cannot wholly mislead the reader who wishes

to estimate Shakespeare's boldness as a word-creator. The following words are all quoted as earliest known examples by the *New English Dictionary*:

Attask. 'To take to task'. *King Lear*, I. iv. 366.
Defuse. 'Distract, perplex'. Ib., I. iv. 2.
Derogate. 'Debased'. Ib., I. iv. 302. Also in *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii. 33, and *Cymbeline*, II. i. 48.
Descry (as a noun). Ib., IV. vi. 217.
Disbranch. 'Sever'. Ib., IV. ii. 32.
Disquantity. Ib., I. iv. 270. Cf. 'Disbench', *Coriolanus*, II. ii. 75.
Fleshment. 'The excitement resulting from a first success'. Ib., II. ii. 130.
Frontlet. 'Brow'. Ib., I. iv. 208.
Germen. 'Seed'. Ib., III. ii. 8; but also in *Macbeth*, IV. i. 59.
Immediacy. Ib., V. iii. 65.
Intrinse (for 'intrinsicate'). Ib., II. ii. 81. Cf. 'reverb', I. i. 155.
Monster, as a verb. Ib., I. i. 223. Cf. *Coriolanus*, II. ii. 81.
Moonshines. 'Months'. Ib., I. ii. 5.
Observant, as a noun. Ib., II. ii. 109.
Out-wall, in a figurative sense. Ib., III. i. 45.
Questrist. Ib., III. vii. 17.
Superflux. Ib., III. iv. 35.

Besides its readiness to create new words, Elizabethan English had another quality which, to the poet, was scarcely less useful. Dr. Abbott notes the freedom of usage which allowed Shakespeare to use the same word in different grammatical relations. 'You can *happy* your friend, *malice* or *foot* your enemy, or *fall* an axe on his neck.' Nowhere did Shakespeare exploit this quality of the language so freely as in his later plays, especially in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. Here are a few of the daring passages in the former play which are made possible by the flexibility of Elizabethan grammar:

> All this . . .
> Was born so like a soldier, that thy cheek
> So much as *lank'd* not. *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. iv. 71.
> (First example in *N. E. D.*)

What I would have spoke
Was beastly *dumb'd* by him.
Antony and Cleopatra, I. v. 50.
(The first example in *N. E. D.* is from *Pericles*.)

My *salad* days
When I was green in judgment; cold in blood.
Ib., I. v. 73.

For her own person,
It *beggar'd* all description. Ib., II. ii. 203.
(First example in *N. E. D.*)

Age cannot wither her, nor custom *stale*
Her infinite variety. Ib., II. ii, 243.

A hand, that kings
Have *lipp'd*, and trembled kissing. Ib., II. v. 30.
(Also in *Othello*, IV. i. 72.)

The wild disguise hath almost
Antick'd us all. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. vii. 132.
(First example in *N. E. D.*)

The n'er-yet-beaten horse of Parthia
We have *jaded* out o' the field. Ib., III. i. 34.
(First example in *N. E. D.*)

Cleopatra
Hath *nodded* him to her. Ib., III. vi. 66.
(First example in *N. E. D.*)

Even with a thought,
The rack *dislimns*. Ib., IV. xii. 10.
(First example in *N. E. D.*)

The interest of these quotations does not end in themselves, for, as we now know from Professor Spurgeon's recent discovery, every one of them particularly struck the attention of Keats. In his copy of Shakespeare they are all marked, a few in the margin only, but most of them underlined. Keats, of course, was less impressed by the grammatical aspect of the quotations than their poetic expressiveness. Yet he imitated the freedom of Elizabethan grammar as much as the more rigid usage of later English allowed him, and but for Shakespeare's example he might never have dared to

write of 'globèd peonies' or 'cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed'. English has never wholly lost its prerogative of varying the parts of speech in poetry, yet what in Shakespeare's time was a common and recognized practice has since become something of a licence.

This, however, is not wholly regrettable, and among the changes which English has undergone since Elizabethan times, there are many improvements. English still gives large opportunities to the poet for the expression of individual feeling and vision, and no writer of powerful imagination has any cause to offend against the genius of the language. To-day, there are certain writers who freely coin new 'words' which no one will ever use again. Such a practice is a sign of violence rather than strength, and is quite contrary to the best traditions of English poetry. The academic writers who admit no words which have not been consecrated by poetry are no less false to the demands of their art. The words of poetry, to be memorable and therefore worthy of metre, must, as Coleridge said, be 'the *best* words in the best order'—their force and expressiveness must give them the appearance of *new* words. How this result is to be achieved is fortunately not a question within the scope of the present essay—indeed, it is a matter which must be left to the poets themselves—and on this point it will be enough to quote the safe dictum of Horace:

> Cui lecta potenter erit res,
> Nec facundia deseret hunc nec lucidus ordo.

BERNARD GROOM.

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